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FRANCIS THE FIRST

AND HIS TIMES.

From the French of
CLARISSE COIGNET,

BY
FANNY TWEMLOW.



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F R A N C I S T H E F I R S T

AND HIS TIMES.

CHAPTER I.

FRENCH CUSTOMS AND MANNERS IN THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

IN the sixteenth century man had not yet analyzed his reasoning faculties. He had neither fathomed their depths, nor ascertained their limits—their strength and their weakness were alike ignored by him. Science was then in its infancy, and nature still shrouded by a veil of mystery. The human mind was in its pristine phase of curiosity and marvel—the slave of imagination, the creative flights of which were unimpeded by aught in the visible or invisible world.

God's presence then permeated the whole universe. He was the first cause and final end of all created matter: from a grain of sand, an insect, a flower, to the myriads of stars and worlds, to the

fate of nations and of peoples—all were believed to be under the immediate control of His divine will. Man was created by His paternal love, after His own image, destined to share His eternal beatitude. Creation in its entirety was one harmonious symphony—Nature converging in man, and man and Nature converging in God.

This ingenuous and optimistic view of the world may seem puerile to our present philosophical and scientific acquirements. Then it was as a nimbus, the light of which guided man's footsteps, and filled his soul with a sure expectation of the after-life. Yet this belief was powerless to check his passions, or to excite scruples as to the mode of gratifying them. Saints have been rare at all times. Nevertheless, God's mercy being infinite, out of faith grew gentleness and hope. As a matter of course, one compounded with Him as with one's fellow-men. His arms were always open to receive the penitent, and no sinner, however great, was beyond the reach of His pardon.

The supreme value attributed to the soul of man, and the constant solicitude of which it was the object, acted as a fountain of Jouvence on the heart. So long as a man feels himself under a father's care, he does not altogether cease to be a child, and the most unruly are accessible to contrition. This analogy may help us to understand the times of which we

are about to speak. Cruelty, disorder and outrage were common ; but lukewarmness and indifference were unknown.

Impulsiveness was in the heyday of youth. Heroism seemed easy—barbarous at times—displayed in the love for war and perils of all kinds, daunted by nothing—a noble feeling of self-confidence in the face of Nature and mankind.

The more delicate susceptibilities of the human heart lay dormant. Our forefathers were insensible to the poetry of Nature : her harmony and her contrasts, her grandeur and her mysteries. They were alive only to material facts: the return of spring, fertile pastures, abundant harvests, open air and broad daylight. These they appreciated as enjoyments second only to carousals and ceremonials ; to the turmoils of war and the clang of arms ; to the neighing of coursers and shouts of victory ; to the enemy vanquished and despoiled.

In the first half of the sixteenth century France was inhabited by two distinct classes. Each had its peculiar customs, language, habits, jealously transmitted from father to son. Local life was all the stronger, because general social life was weak, without any precise basis or definite organization. Each separate group was cemented by a spirit of common interests. Sociability was despotic, narrow-minded, alternately oppressing or supporting its members.

Isolation was more dreaded than independence was esteemed. There were no rights in common, but numberless privileges, attached to such objects as a hedge, a wall, a steeple ; to the land of one, to the post of another. Birth was pre-eminent to all other claims, to the prejudice, doubtless, of intelligent persons of humble estate ; but, as a rule, the majority did not complain so long as the yoke of the upper class was not too galling. The highest principle of government is that which men exercise over themselves. But what a fund of virtue and energy this self-discipline requires !

In the country there were only lords of the soil and peasants ; in the town, simple burghers. Towns, at the period of which we treat, were distinct individualities, not, as now, a congregation of groups of divers elements, devoid of any definite character. They were built, for the most part, on the brow of some lofty ridge, or the border of a river, the summit crowned by a citadel (commanding the town), surrounded by battlements flanked by towers and bastions, the entry to which was accessible through a monumental gateway, with its portcullis and its drawbridge, a deep moat isolating the imposing pile.

Towns in general were built on the same plan : a large square, planted with trees in the centre. On one side arose the cathedral. The town hall and

the courts of justice occupied two other sides of the quadrangle. The style of architecture was a medley of Roman and Gothic : the ogive and the broad arch side by side ; a profusion of pillars, columns, pinnacles decorated with elaborate sculpture, in which figured men and animals ; not unfrequently a history carved in stone—touching, or burlesque, or terrible, or composed of the three elements—the patient work of successive generations. Around this square radiated the narrow, crooked streets, hemmed in by houses of varied aspect ; some of wood, with projecting roofs fronted with turrets and gables. Others were of stone, of loftier and broader dimensions, adorned with balconies and carved basement shafts, arched porches chiselled with mottoes and emblems. Here and there a monastery in its spacious enclosure, within which were its chapel, its school, its cloisters, its dependencies, its gardens—a city within a city.

The general appearance of these towns, with their mural crown, the fortress, their cathedral towers or spires, was both picturesque and imposing, and formed a majestic outline seen from afar. The citizens were proud of their birth-place. All were versed in its history, and were faithful to its traditions and its customs. Every burgher was trained to the science of warfare, served in the local militia, and, in case of need, donned his armour and used his

halberd, albeit somewhat awkwardly. They were the guardians of peace in the streets, and sped in a body to the ramparts in the hour of danger.

First among the citizens were the magistrates—the men of law. Though not of noble birth, their bearing was stiff and haughty. It was curious to see them in their robes on the steps of the court, looking disdainfully on the poor fellows who appealed to them for redress of grievances. On the other hand, they were obsequious and cringing in presence of the governor of the town, and uncovered reverently when speaking to a King's messenger. Next in rank were the manufacturers and merchants, jealously graduated in the social scale, according to their financial prosperity and the nature of their trade.

Domestic life was simple and laborious, austere and monotonous in its ways. Family authority was undisputed. Women were brought up in silent obedience, and never were seen abroad save at church. We are told they had their secret heart-aches—in all ages woman's particular ache.

In the country lord and peasant were in continual contact. The latter, exclusively occupied in agriculture, lived in villages, or in scattered farms, their thoughts and their ambition circumscribed to the result of their labour. It was an event in their lives to visit the annual fair or market of the nearest burgh,

and witness the secular or religious amusements which formed the great attraction of these rustic gatherings.

In truth, the peasant led a comparatively happy life in times when neither war nor pestilence ravaged the country. The royal administration had not yet increased the charges on landed property, nor doubled the statute labour, occasioned by adding its bondage to the feudal servitude. It was, doubtless, an alleviation of servitude—this simple dependence on a lord, under whose protection the peasant lived—the sole fact of close neighbourhood and of reciprocal need of one another was an advantage. And if occasionally injustice and tyranny marred the relationships, there were often instances of generous impulses, generous protection, and tender gratitude. The law of tradition was binding ; the past was held in reverence. The peasant had his genealogy, as well as his lord ; his history might be humble and devoid of lustre, but none the less it imbued him with attachment to the spot of earth on which he was born. The house he occupied was built by his grandsire ; one of his forefathers had tilled the fields he ploughed ; the path he trod was the work of another ; the tree under the shadow of which he sat had been planted by another. He, too, would leave a trace of his labours to his children, and add to each patch of earth its charm and its tradition.

The nobility of the period was exclusively military, brave, and independent of spirit—not easily led. The life of cities and of courts had no attraction for them; the King was proud to be considered the first gentleman of his country, and gentlemen esteemed themselves his hereditary companions, and the upholders of the monarchy. ‘In days of yore,’ says St. Simon, ‘no one uncovered before the King.’ What was then styled the Court was merely a feudal lord’s existence on a grand scale. The Queen had her ladies and maids-of-honour, her pages and servants; the King his guard, the officers of his household, the state dignitaries, who presided over the lavish hospitality of the royal palace.

The nobility flocked from the provinces to visit their monarch, as an act of courtesy due to their suzerain, which in no way lessened their independence or their freedom. They continued to live at home, surrounded by the peasants who cultivated their estates, and by their men-at-arms, who followed them to the field of battle. The provinces at that date were not deserted by the nobility, as was afterwards the case. Near every village was the seigneurial castle—built on the summit of a hill—of defiant and commanding aspect.

Noblemen were not as a rule wealthy; frequent wars emptied their coffers. The vain desire not to be eclipsed by their peers was frequently ruinous: con-

sequently many a castle was dismantled ; its fortifications no longer bristled with men-at-arms ; and as, says Lanoue, it was not possible to cut a fine figure on seven or eight hundred livres a year, and four or five children, so the castle fell out of repair, wind and rain penetrated through crevices, owls built their nests under the roof, weeds and parasitical plants adopted the crumbling walls as their natural right. Within, the family endured privations—lived in great straits, but lost neither pride nor prestige. Poverty in those days did not drive men into mésalliances : a ruined nobleman sought death in the King's service, but scorned to fatten his acres with plebeian wealth ; his sons found places in the army, his daughters in the convent.

When the Seigneur was rich, his castle, always warlike, was vast and imposing. Its extensive estates, comprising numerous dependencies, were occupied by men-at-arms and well supplied with munitions. The interior of the castle contained large and lofty halls, hung with ancient tapestry, on which figured some episode of mythical or Bible history, interspersed with old portraits and curious pano- plies. The furniture was massive and cumbersome, the silver and gold plate was handsome and abundant, the larders were well supplied, and the cellars full. A numerous retinue of men-at-arms, servants, pages, knights, ladies, and maids-of-honour peopled

the castle, and formed the court of its lord and lady.

If burghers and peasants rarely moved from one place to another at this epoch, the nobility, on the contrary, were in perpetual movement. War called them incessantly to the frontiers, or to foreign parts, to Flanders, Germany, or Italy. In the intervals of war they wandered from one end of the kingdom to the other. These journeyings were performed on horseback, according to the fashion of those days ; for in 1550 there were but three coaches in France —the King's, the Duchess of Valentinois', and the Sieur de Laval's. Fourteen years later coaches made their appearance in England, the first known being that of Queen Elizabeth, the sight of which struck the people with amazement.

The free and fiery mettle of the chargers was admirably suited to the temperament, habits, and tastes of the nobility. Horses were not then, as now, a mechanical force fitted for every-day uses ; then there were neither dray nor carriage, but merely saddle horses. The friends and servants of their riders, obedient to touch or word, trained to the strife of battle, swift of foot, they contributed to success in victory or to safety in flight. The steed understood the part he had to play ; he was associated by an instinctive intuition with all his master's adventures and existence ; he shared his

dangers, his privations, his fatigue, his triumphs ; in fact he was, so to say, humanized by continual contact with man.

Bayard's war-horse, Carinan, was so renowned that when left for dead on the battle-field of Ravenna, he was brought to his master's tent, where his wounds were dressed and cured. Bayard afterwards presented him to the Duke of Lorraine as the most precious gift he could make. On the field of Marignan, the Duke, seeing Bayard in danger, returned the noble animal, and thus saved the chevalier in the mêlée.

Children were taught to ride from their earliest infancy ; girls had their hackneys, on which they were simply seated. Catherine de Medicis invented the pommel. Women not unfrequently preferred the pillion, which mode was anything but distasteful to the cavalier ; nevertheless, in urgent moments they bestrode the animal as well as the best horseman, and acquitted themselves gallantly.

To witness on gala occasions a cavalcade of lords and ladies, skirts and pennants fluttering in the breeze, caps with flowing plumes, elegant jackets, multi-coloured doublets, hose and surtouts covered with gold, silver, or silk embroidery, not to mention the finely-damaskeened arms enriched with precious stones, and the not less gorgeous caparison of the horses — a splendid youthful troop passing at full

speed, cleaving the air with joyous cries, the ring of merry peals of laughter echoing over hill and dale, through marsh and ravine—must have been a delight to behold. The nobility held together as a body, if the class itself was exclusive ; family relationships were free, or, rather, it formed but one large clan ; intermarriages for ages had made the race homogeneous through much mingling of blood.

Each family had its chronicles and its genealogy. Everybody knew who was who ; common ancestors had fought side by side somewhere or other in the King's service, or had been boon companions, had met at the King's coronation, or at an ambassador's reception. Or perchance a duel had been the origin of friendship—a good, if not the best, bond of unity ; nor must we forget the incidental episodes of an aged châtelaine's life. When in bygone days the ancestors had courted each other, their grandchildren ought, and did, not forget the fact. Thus the past permeated the present. Cordiality, manners at once courteous and easy, were hereditary virtues put in constant practice by the interchange of hospitality ; life was an uninterrupted series of receptions and festivity—and what feasting ! The tables groaned under the weight of viands more abundant than delicate ; banquets lasted for hours, and were followed by games, feats, dances, or the recital of some stirring adventure, in which love,

according to the chroniclers of the day, was the principal theme, humanity having always been subject to that folly, and the French nobility of the sixteenth century priding themselves on their proficiency in the tender art.

The clergy formed a distinct class, thoroughly Gallican and monarchical; in all disputes between the Pope and the King taking their sovereign's defence. The dignitaries of the Church, such as cardinals, bishops, abbots, belonging to the aristocracy or to the upper class of burghers, had political influence; they were members of the King's Council; confidential missions were entrusted to them, for they were chiefly preferred as ambassadors on account of their diplomatic skill. Men of the world, insinuating in manner, agreeable in conversation, of undisguised gallantry, their proclivities were more for favours from the fair sex and Court pleasures than for the austerities of their calling.

Parochial priests and non-cloistered monks were on terms of cordial familiarity with the lower classes of people. The curate was, in general, addicted to joviality, disdaining neither women nor wine. Even monks did not affect the mask of prudery; Franciscan friars went in and out of farms and shops, at home everywhere, and laying down the law to all; the women ever ready to bow in passive obedience to the holy garb, not unfrequently draw-

ing down on their devoted heads the reproaches of their susceptible lords and masters. After all, what were they but priests? Moreover, nothing could be more characteristic than their sermons. They were not afraid of calling a spade a spade, using the crudest terms, the most vivid colouring. In homely words and personal allusions they would challenge sinners of both sexes, members of their congregation. ‘I will throw my cap at the one of you who has been unfaithful during the year to the holy sacrament of marriage,’ exclaimed a monk from the pulpit; and the men began to laugh in their beards, whilst the women drew their hoods more closely round their faces. Such incidents, however, in no wise disturbed the good understanding between the pastor and his flock—everybody according to his calling.

The theologians of the Sorbonne were less accommodating; their abstruse science made them intolerant. They stood up as champions of the true faith and exterminators of heresy. They were, however, few in number, and when they asserted themselves obnoxiously, the King called them to order.

Amongst all three ecclesiastical grades—namely, the aristocratic, the popular, and the erudite—saints were also to be found: vowed to poverty, prayer, and fasting; living on alms, models of self-sacrifice, con-

secrating themselves to the good of others—the incarnation of ideal Christianity, the honour of the Christian standard.

If it should be asked how the education of youth was conducted in this unsettled life, the answer is alarming. Wise men and philosophers had not yet given the subject a thought ; the high-sounding word ‘pedagogy’ did not exist. Children came into the world, and in it they were left to take their chance. Woe to them ! What became of the girls ? Girls’ schools were not even dreamt of then ; they were taught to pray, to work the genealogy of their blason : this slender fund of knowledge was deemed sufficient, and was all a nun or some modest governess could impart. Now if with this they became, as tradition pretends, charming and seductive women, Dame Nature must certainly have taken more than half the trouble on herself ; besides, at an epoch when curiosity was stimulated by the revival of art, gifted intellects, as a matter of course, took charge of their own education, which is undoubtedly the best of all.

Boys were taught but a trifle more. Lanoue tells us there were four methods adopted for their instruction : 1, The universities ; 2, infantry regiments ; 3, service in a foreign country as page in some illustrious house ; or 4, in the same quality in a noble French family. And Lanoue adds : ‘In the university boys take all a schoolboy’s defects ;

they lose all polish, are discourteous in manners and language, inept in the use of arms and in sport—in short, become utterly unfit companions for gentlemen. Vain of their shallow learning, they assume airs of superiority over other youths ; and as they leave the university too soon, they know nothing literally but a few big words, for which they have no manner of use. Added to this, there being no one to control them, their conduct is consequently most disorderly.'

Military training was scarcely a better school. Special officers were, it is true, appointed to take charge of the cadets and teach them the use of arms ; but what for the most part were these military tutors ? Libertines, whose bad example was disastrous ; instead of gaining good, the youths were virtually lost. They learnt to blaspheme, to quarrel with their friends, to gamble, and stake their very shirts when money failed. Dissolute, licentious, they were ever ready to pillage and bully the lower orders without mercy.

Foreign sojourn was scarcely more beneficial ; it was adopted on the principle 'that our neighbour's drugs are better than our own.' The only advantage was in the acquirement of languages, but by how many disadvantages was this one outweighed ! 'In Germany young men become loggerheaded—coarse, awkward, and clumsy in all ways—and when they

return to their country, they degrade into license the liberty they enjoy. In Italy they become refined ; but their passions are quickened ; they are more prone to vice, and they bring back to France a stock of pernicious tendencies.'

'In a noble French family, it is true, young men attend all sorts of great festivals, such as triumphs, banquets, tournaments ; they learn how to dress, how to talk, to move with ease, to excel in games and athletic sports ; but at the same time they are saturated with the immorality which reigns at every Court. Their language is ribald, their conduct loose, they take the name of God in vain, are sarcastic, addicted to slander, to falsehood, and deceit. The squires and masters appointed to direct them take their office as a sinecure, and only set them bad examples. Or if perchance they discharge their duty, it is in a careless, superficial way, more especially as the number of pages is too great for careful supervision. Thus the young men are neither taught nor clothed sufficiently ; and may be seen running about bare-legged playing at ninepins with lackeys and grooms.'

Such is the picture given us by Lanoue, who ends his observations by appealing to the State to found preparatory and military schools under efficient discipline.

Nevertheless, out of this disorder a strong race

sprang up, capable of generous impulse and noble aspirations. Initiative and resolution are often due to chance circumstances, and the children of this epoch at times displayed even precocious qualities.

Marshal Fleurange, for instance, tells us how he left his home to enlist in the King's service. His name was Robert, the third of the celebrated house of La Marche, descended in right line from the 'Sanglier des Ardennes.' His father was the Seigneur of Sedan, his uncle a cardinal, his mother a De Cröy, 'a princess of Chimay.' The family lived in regal state at Sedan.

Robert's childhood was spent in his father's family. In his quality of son and heir, he had a tutor, gentlemen and valets attached to his person. From his early years he distinguished himself in corporal exercises. Strong and slender of limb, he was indefatigable in all games and in fencing. Endowed with a lively imagination, all chivalrous stories excited his enthusiasm. He would remain for hours without moving, shut up in his room, devouring the pages of a novel, in ecstatic admiration of its hero, identifying himself with its history.

About 1501, Robert, who was then nine years of age and a good equestrian, taking counsel with himself, determined to see a little of the world, and to visit Louis XII., who was at that time the most renowned prince in Christendom. For some time

he brooded over his project in secret, then timidly announced it to the Viscount d'Etoge, a relation of the family, and to the Captain Jeannot, who commanded a company of his father's men-at-arms. His two confidants were at first alarmed at the bare idea. Little by little our young hero convinced them of the delights of his plan, and gained them over to plead his cause with his father, his mother's consent having been already obtained. So when the Prince, who was then absent waging war against the Duke of Lorraine, returned to Sedan, he was pressed on the subject by his son and his son's allies. Finding it impossible to resist their importunities, especially those of the 'young adventurer,' the father at length complied.

Every preparation is made, and a chosen suite formed to accompany the boy. First his tutor, Fontaine, son of the Provost of Bouillon; two gentlemen—Tourneville, yclept the Knight of the Ardennes, and François de la Joust, Lord of Perrault, with Vidost, the colour-bearer of the party. Robert bids adieu to his parents right valiantly, and starts on his travels, buoyed up with the hope of meeting with romantic adventures, such as the rescue of some fair lady, and the summary punishment of her offender.

His first halt was at Pougy, to greet his aunt, Madame de Braine. Thence he bent his course

directly to Blois, the Court residence, where the little band arrived safely. M. de Tourneville explained to the King the object of their journey. Louis XII., much amused at the story, gave orders that the new arrivals should remain at the château until the next day. Master Robert, on being summoned, made his entry, nothing daunted by the presence of Majesty.

‘Welcome, my boy,’ said the King. ‘You are too young to enter my service, therefore I shall send you to Amboise, to M. d’Angoulême. He is just your age, and I think you will suit each other.’

‘I am ready to go wherever it may please your Majesty to send me,’ replied the child; ‘though I am old enough to serve you, and to go to battle if you will.’

‘You are a courageous, plucky little fellow,’ answered the King; ‘but I fear your legs are too weak for long marches. . However, I promise to take you with me later. I will send for you.’

So saying, Louis XII. had Robert ushered into the Queen’s apartment. She and her ladies loaded him with sweetmeats, and plied him with questions.

On the morrow Robert left for Amboise. He alighted at the hostelry of Saint Barbe, where he awaited the commands of the Duchess d’Angoulême, whose first kind deed was to send him a copious

supply of refreshments, with the order to go to the Castle after his dinner.

The Count d'Angoulême was then seven years old, his sister Marguerite two years his senior. They had been brought up at Amboise under their mother's eye, with a bevy of other young nobles, boys and girls, all of whom were delighted at the arrival of a fresh companion, of whose exploits they had heard so much. Robert was received with open arms (children make friends quickly with each other). He was greeted with a volley of questions. He and the young François d'Angoulême measured heights, and François proved to be as tall as Robert, notwithstanding the latter's advantage of two years. Then came the initiation of the new comrade to their games and exercises, the choice of his place at table, and so forth, all matters of merry yet anxious combination. In a few days the King, on his way to Brittany by the Loire, in his royal barge, stopped at Amboise, without disembarking. François and Robert were despatched to greet the monarch, both in the same litter. On arriving at their destination, they quarrelled as to who should alight first. The chronicler adds : 'Our young adventurer thought himself as much master as the prince.'

To return, however, to the daily life of the youths at Amboise. Archery and rackets were their favourite pastimes. In the forest they delighted in

setting nets and traps for all sorts of animals, stags not excepted. ‘The game of *escaigne* was most in favour. The game, lately imported from Italy, was not acclimatized in France, and was played with a heavy ball studded with leaden points. Another game, also Italian, consisted in driving a spherical cask. To the player’s arm was attached, with the aid of leather straps from elbow to wrist, a pewter bracelet, lined with felt. Strength and skill were equally requisite to bear off the palm. The competitors were generally François d’Angoulême with Anne de Montmorency,* against Baron Chabot and Robert de la Marche.’ Sham fights were also organized, but these miniature wars often excited several of the juvenile soldiers. When older, they were allowed to wear arms, and to indulge in tilts and tournaments. A memorable tournament was held at the Château de Blois, in the court near the keep, at which these youngsters specially distinguished themselves. The Marquis de Montferrat was the first champion for the ladies. M. de Bourbon was accompanied by a hundred men-at-arms, and Robert de la Marche by five hundred. No life could be better adapted to form good soldiers. It was an apprenticeship which thoroughly initiated youths into the use of every description of arms, taught them how to harness and

* Montmorency, subsequently Constable of France; Chabot, Admiral la Marche, made prisoner in the Spanish War.

groom horses, how to group and class men on the field of battle, how to move troops for attack or defence.

In addition to military science, education comprised, or was supposed to comprise, other branches of learning. Scholarly abbés used every endeavour to inculcate in the youthful mind the charms of Latin grammar and the beauties of theology, with what result Heaven only knows! If a few of the most docile learnt sufficient to follow the services of the Church in their missals, the majority, among whom was Anne de Montmorency, the Queen's godson, could not read, or even sign their names without difficulty.

Alain Chartier, 'the father of French eloquence,' in the preceding century exclaimed :

'The senseless notion of to-day is that a nobleman has no need to know his alphabet; that it is derogatory to a well-born man to be able to read or write.'

It is easy to conceive the follies and escapades of these undisciplined intellects. Their whole energies centred in the love of danger and of strife; the wilder the enterprise the greater its attraction. For instance: A band of rash youths wagered never to enter a town otherwise than on the roofs, leaping from one house to another across the narrow streets. Tavannes made his horse leap from rock to rock in

the Forest of Fontainebleau, clearing at least twenty-eight feet of ground. Jacques of Savoy, Duke of Nemours, galloped up the steps of the Palais de Justice, and, after caracoling round the great hall and in the gallery, went out by the staircase of the Sainte Chapelle, his horse not having made a single stumble. Others wager to ride sixty leagues in one day by relays of horses. They win their bet, and stop at a hostelry in Bourgogne, where they insist that ten men they find there shall dine in their gloves. A quarrel ensues ; swords are drawn ; and many are wounded on each side !

On another occasion they set a pile of wood ablaze, and make their horses dash through it. They lie in ambuscade to test the courage of their comrades, or play at wounding or even killing each other. Jarnac one day nearly lost his life ; he was hung up in play, and only cut down at the last gasp. At Amboise, Francis I. and his Court having retired for the night, the Duke of Orleans invited his companions to take a ramble on the bridges to clear them of the marauders, who were in the habit of roaming there and attacking all the passers-by. They sallied forth and found a troop of varlets, some in the King's livery, masters of the bridge. Not recognising the Duke of Orleans, an attack ensued, in which the Duke would have been killed had not M. de Castelnau placed himself between the combatants, receiving

the blow destined for the Duke. This generous impulse cost him his life. M. d'Orléans remained master of the bridge. He then ordered the body of M. de Castelnau to be removed, expressing his deep regret at the occurrence, and for the loss of one to whom he was really attached, and to whom on this occasion he owed his life. The King was greatly irritated on hearing of the scandalous affair, but neither the disaster nor his father's anger checked the Duke's propensity for this style of adventure.

Religion, chivalry, class feeling, in a measure counterbalanced these barbarous proclivities. Religion was more in faith than practice. The turmoil and effervescence of military life excluded all possibility of practice; but a strong belief in the dogmas of the Church pervaded all classes. However much they might turn to ridicule winebibbing monks, or ecclesiastical dignitaries preaching the Gospel of poverty whilst living in luxury in their palaces, the Church was all-powerful: her solemn ceremonies, her splendid organization, her experience of human nature, her tact and suppleness of thought, were so many means of governing mankind. Nothing was above or beneath her rule. She dictated her laws to nations, and controlled the smallest detail of individual life. In ages of disorder and violence, she inculcated respect, gentleness, and good faith; protected the weak against the strong, and

promulgated the bonds of humanity. Remorse and repentance, in general, succeed to unruly passions, and then religion asserts her sway. The troubled spirit seeks consolation and peace in faith; the criminal slain on the field of battle dies like Bayard, a crucifix on his breast. God is ever ready to forgive the truly penitent.

The axiom that ‘noblesse oblige’ was another powerful check on instinctive life. It has been stigmatized as pride, but it has at least the virtue of drawing us out of our narrow personality, by linking us with those who preceded and those who may succeed us. In the sixteenth century the past had great prestige; types of honour and virtue left as an heritage from father to son were held as binding examples to follow, to be transmitted unblemished to succeeding generations. This reverence for the memory of the past counteracted selfishness and personal succeeding. In domestic life children undertook the duties of servants, esteeming it an honour to serve their parents, as did vassals to serve their lords or knights their ladies.

For example, Bayard belonged to an old family of Dauphin, famed for its honour and courage. Some of his ancestors fell at Poictiers, some at Crécy, others at Agincourt. His father was so severely wounded at Guinegate as to be obliged to quit the army and retire to his castle in the valley of

Grésivaudan, where he lived in peace and penury, surrounded by his numerous family. In 1489, at the advanced age of eighty, he summoned his four sons, and asked each what he meant to be. The eldest replied he would remain at home, serve his father, administer the estate, and try to exterminate the bears. The two youngest begged they might follow the career of their uncles, MM. de Grenoble et d'Esnay, priests. The second, who was but thirteen years old, but of dauntless, fiery spirit, declared himself infatuated with all he had read of wars and heroes, that his only wish was to take arms in the service of his King and country, and he hoped in God not to dishonour this noble career.

His father consented, observing, ‘You are the living portrait of your grandfather, that accomplished knight. Be it far from me to prevent your following his footsteps.’ The next day he sent a messenger to his brother-in-law, the Bishop of Grenoble, entreating him to come and see him on a grave family affair. The Bishop lost no time in obeying the summons, and went to the castle, where he found a few gentlemen, friends of the Bayards.

After dinner the head of the family asked where it would be advisable to send the youth to learn the science of war? Everyone gave his opinion. The Bishop recalled the long friendship of the Dukes of Savoy, and offered to make an appeal to them;

'and if it be your pleasure,' he added, 'when the child is well equipped, I will give him a horse which I recovered but four days ago from the Bishop of Uriage, and I will take him with me to-morrow to Chambéry, where the Duke Charles is now staying.'

Everyone was charmed at this offer, and the venerable Bayard, presenting his son to the Bishop, 'Take him, my Lord Bishop,' said he; 'and may he be in future an honour to you!'

Everything was promptly arranged. The Bishop sent for his tailor, who brought velvets and satins, and all the requisites for an outfit, which was completed during the night. The next morning, before starting, young Bayard was presented to the company mounted on his horse. On the first touch of the spurs, feeling so light a weight on his back, the animal began to kick and rear. Alarm was felt for the boy; but he, instead of calling for help, applied the spurs with more vigour, and raced his steed at full gallop round the court until he was tamed, to the surprise and admiration of all. His father was radiant, and asked his son had he been frightened. The child proudly shook his head. The gentlemen went up to compliment him, and the Bishop of Grenoble cried out to him not to dismount, but to bid adieu to the company present. On which the child, with a glad countenance, wished his father a long and happy life, craving his blessing. His

mother, in a turret chamber, was meanwhile weeping with joy that her boy had acquitted himself so nobly, and with sorrow that the moment of parting had come. Hurriedly descending to the courtyard, she embraced her darling, and conjured him to honour God, to be gentle and courteous to his peers, and charitable to the poor. Then she took from her satchel a small purse containing ten crown-pieces, the fruit of her economies, placed it in her boy's hand, and gave a valise in charge to the Bishop's servant, to whom she made a gift of two crowns, recommending him to beg the chevalier's valet, to whom her son was to be attached, to take care of his linen and other effects.

At length they set out, young Bayard as happy as a king on his prancing steed. The day was Saturday. The travellers arrived the same evening at Chambéry. They were received at the gates of the city by the clergy who came to do homage to their Bishop. After the usual compliments were exchanged, they went to the house of one of the chief citizens, very proud of the honour done him. The following morning, Sunday, the Bishop hastened to the castle to present his respects to the Duke. Delighted to receive the Bishop, who bore a character of saintly piety, they went to church together; and during Mass the Bishop gave the Gospel to the Prince to kiss, as was customary.

After Mass they returned to the castle, where the Prince detained the Bishop to dinner, at which his lordship was waited on by young Bayard. His extreme youth and graceful manners attracted the Duke's attention ; he inquired who he was.

' My lord,' replied the Bishop, ' he is a young soldier, who wishes to enter your service, if it be your pleasure to accept him. After dinner I shall have the honour of introducing him.'

' In truth,' said the Duke, who had taken a fancy to the boy, ' I should be foolish to refuse such a present.'

Young Bayard, who overheard this conversation, was not long at his dinner. He hurried to the stable, had his horse saddled, and entered the palace court at a gentle trot.

The Duke, who was leaning on one of the balconies, seeing the boy advance with the martial air of a soldier of thirty, turned to the Bishop, and said :

' I think it is our pretty youth I see yonder on horseback.'

' It is, my lord,' said the Bishop, ' my nephew, who comes of a good stock. His father is too weak from age and from wounds received on the field of battle to come to you, but he offers you his son.'

' By my troth,' answers the Duke, ' I accept him gladly—a comely present indeed. May God make a valiant man of him !'

Whereon the Duke gave the youth in charge of his first equerry, and the Bishop, with a grateful heart, took leave of the Prince.

To rank as a perfect gentleman, it was not sufficient to be an expert in games and the management of arms ; it was indispensable to a true knight to be courteous, attentive, deferential, discreet, and respectful to women. This chivalrous sentiment gave a degree of refinement and grace to family intercourse, inasmuch as it exacted choice language, tender expressions, the art of reciting a love story with charm, how to make one's entry and exit gracefully, and when to bow head or knee to the fair.

The young scion of nobility was invariably attached as page in the service of some high-born lady. His duties were to follow her in her walks, to wait on her at table, to do her commissions, even write her letters ; to read, sing, or talk to her for her amusement. Hence occasionally he was entrusted with the most delicate missions ; but that is not our affair.

Gallantry was a science which ladies took in earnest. They seriously discussed its code, styled ‘The Art of Love,’ and inculcated its tenets to their suite. Love in these lessons was essentially spiritualized, consecrated by the words, ‘The love of God and of women.’ One was deemed inseparable from the other. Interminable were the discussions on this

theme, in which subtlety and ingenuousness were strangely brought to bear. A knight's duty was to prove the beauty and virtue of his lady by his valour. This occasioned deeds of rash daring and spontaneous acts of heroism. At Ravenna, Gaston de Foix fought with one arm bare from the elbow to the gauntlet, holding it aloft, and calling on his comrades to witness, as he rushed into the fray, how he could fight for love of his mistress. A gentleman of Picardy vowed he would fight with but a shred of boot on his legs ; another that he would wear no armour but his shirt, and for helmet his lady's hood, until he triumphed over ten knights, and could lead them captive to her feet—and he kept his oath. The literature of the day was in the same spirit. It would be impossible now to wade through these volumes, filled with the most absurd fables and the most unlikely stories. Lanoue condemns them as utterly misguiding the imagination and warping all true notions of virtue, inasmuch as knights did not scruple to act in defiance of their fathers and their suzerain, to follow and protect their ladies, adding, and ‘how frequently the lady was unworthy of such blind devotion !’

Thus it will be seen education in those days was not given at school, but in daily life, and through the sentiments and manners of the time. Life was full of contrasts, at once sentimental and refined,

yet combined with an uncontrolled passion for single-handed fights or the stirring excitement of the battle-field. Impetuous, bold, and boisterous, a generation was solidly constituted whose fund of genuine simplicity survived the springtide of life, and endowed all with a capacity for juvenile impulse and transports of adoration in mature age. The entire race was youthful ; heroism was its vivifying force ; it taught men how to live nobly, and how to die bravely.

CHAPTER II.

AMBOISE, ANNE OF BRITTANY, AND LOUISE OF
SAVOY.

THE cradle of ‘*la vieille France*’ was situated between two rivers, the Seine and the Loire, and extended a little north of the former and south of the latter.

This country was always naturally highly favoured, both by its genial climate and great fertility, its rivers abounding with fish, verdant pastures and corn-fields, forests stocked with game, extending over large tracts, fruit-trees in abundance. The landscape is altogether Arcadian. Gentle slopes break the horizon here and there. On the hill-tops vast castles, characteristic of bygone days, still remind the people of their ancient race and their glorious traditions.

On the summit of a rock on the banks of the Loire stands the castle of Amboise. Behind this rock flows a rivulet, the Amasse, a tributary of the Loire. The view from the castle commands the whole environs. Towns at a distance of seven leagues can be dis-

cerned from its terrace. Jean de Marmoutier, a chronicler of the twelfth century, relates how, after the siege of Bourges, when Cæsar encamped on the heights of Amboise, its strategical position struck him so forcibly that he ordered a tower to be built on the rock, to be crowned with a statue of Mars. This statue was thrown down in a storm invoked by St. Martin, who then and there proclaimed the downfall of paganism. About this time a castle was added to the tower.

In the early times Amboise had been held by the Frankish kings. It was on the island of St. Jean, situated on the Loire near Amboise, that Clovis met Alaric, King of the Visigoths. Towards the end of the ninth century Louis le Bègue alienated this appanage of the Crown in favour of the Comte d'Anjou, from whom it passed to the house of Thouars. In the fifteenth century, Count Louis Thouars being accused of treason, for siding with the English, Amboise was confiscated by Charles VII., and remained ever afterwards a royal domain. Louis XI. created the Order of St. Michael within this castle, where he afterwards confined his wife, Charlotte of Savoy — condemned to lead a solitary life, a prey to melancholy, surrounded only by her husband's spies.

Charles VII. had fortified the castle; Charles VIII. embellished it. He was born there, and the

memory of the careless life he led gazing on the flowing river, or reading tales of chivalry, was dear to him. When he became King, the foremost French and Italian artists were employed to enlarge and adorn the castle. The two great towers and the chapel were built by his orders. The garden and the beautiful gallery overlooking the river were the creation of Louis XII.

Two women above all others left traces of their sojourn at Amboise, Anne of Brittany, and Louise of Savoy.

Anne of Brittany, one of the most remarkable women of her time, was born at Nantes on the 26th of January, 1477. She belonged to the celebrated house of Montfort, whose quarrels with that of Blois fill the annals of the fourteenth century. Through the Dreux branch she was allied to the royal family of France. Francis II. was her father, and her mother was Marguerite de Foix, whose ancestors had reigned over Navarre.

Marguerite died in giving birth to a second daughter, and the two sisters were placed under the care of the Countess of Laval, who, Brantôme tells us, was ‘a clever and accomplished lady.’ Anne, as heir to the duchy, was sought in marriage by a host of European princes while she was still in her cradle. The two most important aspirants were Maximilian and Charles VIII.

Francis II., weak in body and feeble in mind, was utterly incapable of governing the turbulent duchy of Brittany. Incited by his own nobles, throughout the reign of Louis XI. he waged continual war against his suzerain without knowing why, and the accession of Charles VIII. to the throne served only to increase the existing anarchy. This young monarch being only thirteen years old, Louis XI., by his will, had named Anne of Beaujeu, his sister, regent, an office which she shared nominally with her husband, a Bourbon of the elder branch. Brantôme tells us he was a dullard, and was treated as such by his wife, a true daughter of Louis XI., whom she resembled morally and physically, though of nobler and prouder mien. Her features were cast in the same mould—the outward expression never revealing the inner thought—the same supercilious smile on the compressed lips, a countenance which betokened alike caution and resolution. When invested with supreme authority as regent, Anne of Beaujeu was but twenty-three years old. The Duke of Orleans at once claimed the regency in his right of first Prince of the blood. Meeting with a firm refusal, he raised an army among the nobility, and, aided by the Duke of Brittany, they endeavoured to form foreign alliances, and to rouse Europe against France. But Anne was not to be easily daunted. Having sown

the seeds of civil war in England by facilitating the descent of Henry Tudor on English ground, with the view of dethroning Richard III., and further excited a revolt in Flanders in order to keep Maximilian and Ferdinand occupied, she next turned to quell the rebellion at home. After several slight encounters, she assembled the whole of the royal forces, commanded by La Trémouille, joined the camp, taking the young Prince with her, and marched straight into Brittany, to attack the feudal league in its last intrenchments. The Duke of Orléans, with twelve thousand men, Bretons, Germans, English, was thoroughly routed at St. Aubin-du-Cormier, taken prisoner, and sent to Bourges, without more ceremony than if he had been a common soldier. Francis II., utterly defeated, signed with Madame de Beaujeu the treaty of Sablé, by which four Breton fortresses were delivered up to the French; and Francis pledged himself, in accordance with feudal custom, not to marry without the consent of the King of France. However, the young Prince died shortly after—of grief and shame, say the records of the time.

Nevertheless, the nobles of Brittany, boasting that from all ages their kings, dukes, and princes recognised no other sovereign save God Almighty, were bent on recovering their strongholds, and freeing themselves from the humiliating conditions of the

treaty of Sablé. To compass this end, they determined to marry the heiress to a prince of weak character, under whom their independence would run no risk of restraint. Their choice fell on Jean d'Albret, who had fought with them throughout the troublous times, and whose incapacity was patent. Moreover, Francis II. had, before he died, ratified this project.

Marshal de Rieux, appointed by the Duke guardian of his two daughters and administrator of the duchy, paid a visit to the young Anne, conjuring her respectfully to fulfil her father's behest and to marry Jean d'Albret.

Duchess Anne, at this time only twelve years old, was far above her years both in mind and stature. She was already a beautiful girl, her beauty giving promise of further development. Rather under the middle height, one foot a trifle shorter than the other (a defect which she studiously concealed), she was none the less of most noble presence, calm and dignified in manner; intelligent, serious, and resolute by nature, and strongly imbued with the sense of her high position. Her character was matured by the turbulent events around her. She was a thoroughbred Breton, having all the pride, the susceptibility and the obstinacy of the race, with deep feelings and a strong will. Her opinions and her views were circumscribed, as she was incapable or unwilling to

conform them to a higher or broader standard. Under opposition she was liable to fits of fierce anger and to implacable hatred. ‘What she has once decided on, she insists on carrying out, in spite of smiles or tears,’ said the Venetian ambassadors ; but the candour and gracefulness of youth lent a charm even to her defects.

On the other hand, she was loyal and courageous. She never broke her word, forgot a promise, or forsook a friend. She was generous, constant in her affections, and strictly virtuous. She had strong religious faith. She inherited from her proud lineage a taste and instinct for power ; she knew how to support the burdens it entails, and possessed that native authority which commands respect. As a girl she was endowed with a singular political intelligence and insight of affairs. Statesmen were glad to converse with her on public matters, the justness of her opinions and her decision eliciting their admiration.

A princess thus gifted was not likely to accept a husband imposed upon her by her subjects. After listening attentively to the Marshal’s pleadings in favour of Jean d’Albret, Anne replied that if her father had promised she should marry the Duke, he did so when his intellect was failing and under the influence of others, more especially of the Countess de Laval, who had complete empire over him. With all due deference to her father’s authority, she

had repeatedly protested against being thus disposed of, and she continued steadfast in this view. Was it not contrary to all propriety, and also to the interests of Brittany, that she, the richest heiress in Christendom, should wed an ugly old widower with heaps of children, and already a grandfather ?

Anne's choice was Maximilian ; he, too, was a widower, but only thirty years old, the finest-looking prince of his day, of most polished manners. He was King of the Romans, with the sure prospect of inheriting the Imperial throne, a detail in no wise distasteful to the ambitious young Duchess.

The Marshal de Rieux raised some objections, but Anne persisted in her purpose, and obliged him to despatch messengers deputed to ask the Emperor Frederick's consent to the marriage of his son with the Duchess, stipulating that Maximilian should bring a German army with him to protect Brittany from French encroachments. Unfortunately, between miserly father and the Flemish provinces, which were only administered by him in his children's name, Maximilian was the poorest and most dependent of all princes. Left a widower at twenty-three years of age, he was naturally desirous of marrying again. The good Flemings did not or would not understand this. The memory of Mary of Burgundy was sacred to them, and on the first whisper of Maximilian replacing her, their indigna-

tion was so great that they expelled him from the Netherlands, and sent his little daughter Marguerite, a child of four, to be educated at the Court of his enemy, Louis XI., with a view to her future marriage with the Dauphin. Certain historians pretend that, in acting thus, the Flemings were actuated more by a love of authority than by motives of stern morality. Such is not our belief.

Affairs were at this crisis on the arrival of the Duchess's delegates in Germany. Maximilian was perplexed beyond measure; without either States or money it was impossible for him to make a triumphal entry into Brittany at the head of an army. A hero might perhaps have risked an adventure to win such a prize, but Maximilian had nothing of the hero in his nature. All he did was to depute the Count of Nassau as his proxy for the nuptial ceremony, which was performed privately in the cathedral at Rennes. On returning from the cathedral, in conformity with established custom, the Count placed his bare leg in the Duchess's couch. But this platonic marriage, followed by an equally platonic alliance with England, Spain, and the Empire, with a view of dismembering France, neither satisfied Anne nor modified the situation. France still held the fortresses, threatened the province, and persisted in claiming the Duchess in marriage. The nobles quarrelled and fought in

presence of their sovereign lady, whose hands were tied, and she was powerless to surmount the difficulties of her equivocal position, having neither money nor soldiers at her command. To a person of her haughty, quick temperament, such a situation was intolerable. Days, months, and years passed—three years since her father's death—and no solution was to be found.

Anne's patience was exhausted. Suddenly she determines to rend the veil, avows her marriage and her alliances, and assumes the title of Queen of the Romans, to the surprise of all Europe and to the exasperation of France.

Madame de Beaujeu, on the alert, declares the Treaty of Sablé null and void, invades Brittany, takes possession of Nantes, and threatens to occupy Rennes.

Anne was plunged in the deepest embarrassment. Her allies had too much to occupy them at home to bestir themselves in her behalf. As to her husband, he was engaged in war with Hungary and cared nothing for his Duchess. Anne's blood boiled in her veins; the pride and military spirit of her ancestors were roused in her. In her indignation she knew not how to extricate herself from her difficulties, when an unexpected incident suddenly changed the aspect of affairs.

During his long sojourn in Brittany at the time

of his rebellion, the Duke of Orleans had become enamoured of Anne, notwithstanding her tender years ; and Varillas assures us that, regardless of his wife, Jeanne de France, the Duke placed himself on the list of Anne's suitors. At any rate, whether as friend or lover, she treated him with confidence. Their interests were identical, and though not yet in her teens, her ardent nature soon kindled into enthusiasm for a partisan of her house. The two were wont to discuss public affairs together, and to look upon their interests in common. The Duke's defeat and imprisonment at Bourges distressed Anne, and the wish to set him free was probably one of the incentives to her coveting a throne.

Madame de Beaujeu knew this, and when Charles VIII., in a moment of generous impulse, liberated the Duke of Orleans, she promised to reinstate him in royal favour if he undertook the mission of persuading the young Duchess to espouse the King of France. The Duke accepted the delicate task.

Anne, beset by difficulties, was delighted at the unexpected return of her old friend. The first effusive welcome over, it was an easy task for him to convince her of the thorny path in which her marriage with Maximilian had led her. He stimulated her pride by expatiating on the attitude of

indifference maintained by her husband. Anne, lured by the prospect of reigning over France, listened, and was persuaded. True, her conscience suggested religious scruples, but the Church, indulgent as usual in such matters of State, dissolved a marriage which had never been consummated.

Madame de Beaujeu lost no time in sending little Marguerite of Austria back to Flanders, and on the 6th December, 1492, Anne of Brittany became Queen of France. She was then fifteen, the King twenty-two years of age.

The coronation took place at St. Denis, after which the royal pair entered Paris in state. Amboise was chosen as the royal residence. Anne acquitted herself with dignity and grace in her exalted station. Madame de Beaujeu, accustomed as she was to govern, imagined the young Queen would leave her in the enjoyment of her power and prerogatives; but she soon discovered her mistake. Anne from the first never suffered anyone to forget that she was Queen of France and Duchess of one of its finest provinces. Charles VIII., too, grew tired of his sister's yoke. Of an imaginative and romantic disposition, devoid of all political tact, he and his young courtiers began to concert the wild scheme of an expedition to Italy. Madame de Beaujeu endeavoured to dissuade them from what she rightly deemed an act of folly. Her prudent counsel was

rejected. The whole Court, headed by the Queen, was unanimous in its opposition, and Madame de Beaujeu was the first victim to the marriage she had arranged with patriotic disinterestedness. But she had her father's strength of will and character. Instead of resenting this ingratitude by reproaches or useless recriminations, she withdrew from Court—resigned, without a murmur, the power she had exercised for seven years with sagacity and firmness—and on her accession to the title of Duchess of Bourbon at the death of her brother-in-law, she, her husband, and their daughter Suzanne, took up their abode in their vast domains, where they lived in great state.

The premature and sudden death of Charles VIII., at twenty-eight years of age, soon after his return from the fatal expedition in Italy, is known to all.

‘In great worldly glory, and in peace with God,’ relates Commines, ‘on the 7th April, 1498, being the eve of Palm Sunday, he left the Queen’s room, taking her with him to watch a game of tennis in the castle trenches. On entering a gallery, the King struck his head against the door, but took no notice of the accident, and conversed with everyone as he stood looking at the game. All at once he gave a loud cry, saying he trusted he had never been guilty of mortal sin, and fell backwards. This happened about two in the afternoon. He was laid on

a mattress that was fortunately at hand. No one dared to risk moving him, and he expired at nine o'clock the same evening, at twenty-eight years of age.'

Anne was with him to the last. If she had married Charles VIII. for worldly motives, rather than for love, she was seriously attached to her duties, and was a faithful and affectionate wife. Her grief was genuine. She was the first queen who wore black mourning up to this time. Widowed queens had hitherto worn white, and during their widowhood were known as 'Reines Blanches.'

The Duke of Orleans, on hearing of the catastrophe, burst into tears, and repaired in all haste to Amboise ; entered the chamber where the King was laid out, knelt in prayer by the bedside, sprinkled holy water on the corpse, and then passed into the Queen's apartment, vainly endeavouring to console her. The royal widow remained in the strictest seclusion, refusing to see anyone until after the funeral, which was conducted with exceeding pomp, at the expense of the new King, as the State coffers were empty.

Anne, being childless, returned to Brittany. By her marriage contract she was bound, should Charles VIII. die without heirs, to marry his successor. She was, moreover, much attached to Louis XII., who, on his side, retained his old affection for her ;

but he was married, and, he pretended, married against his will. Anne promised him, if the Church pronounced the dissolution of his first matrimonial bond, she would be his Queen. The following months were occupied by his suit for divorce from Jeanne de France—a sad and scandalous proceeding, to which Alexander VI. lent himself with guilty complaisance. His adhesion was bought by the cession of the Duchy of Valentinois, and promise of the hand of a princess of the D'Albret family for his infamous son Cesar. Poor Jeanne retired to a convent at Bourges, and nine months after the death of Charles VIII., Anne of Brittany, his widow, became the bride of Louis XII. The marriage was celebrated at St. Denis, 7th January, 1499. Nothing was omitted to give lustre to the event, which was followed by the most magnificent fêtes in Paris, and by the return of the Court in regal state to Amboise.

Louis XII., however, with a delicate consideration for the feelings of the Queen (who naturally could not return to Amboise without emotion, and even compunction), arranged for her to remain alone there for the first few days; in fact, during the fifteen years of their wedded life, Louis XII. never once failed in chivalrous deference to his Queen, and Brantôme tells us he exacted the same respectful courtesy towards her from others. On one occasion some clerks of the Court got up a farce, in which the

King and his suite were introduced, though without turning them into ridicule. Louis XII. allowed it to be played, provided the Queen's name was not mentioned, supplementing his royal consent with the threat, 'they should all be hanged if they ventured to disobey the injunction.'

Anne reigned supreme within the Château. All ambassadors and foreign princes on their arrival were immediately sent by the King to pay her homage. Louis well knew how capable she was of entertaining and pleasing these distinguished guests, and the pleasure it gave her to converse with foreigners of quality. Her appearance was full of majesty, her conversation brilliant. From time to time she would intermingle her French with a foreign word or two, which she learnt from her chamberlain, M. de Grignaux. He once amused himself by teaching her some improper Spanish words, and confided the joke to the King, who joined in the fun ; but before the Spanish ambassador arrived, Louis XII. warned his Queen of the hoax, laughing at it immensely, while she, on the contrary, flew into a passion, and would, but for the King's entreaties and the Chevalier's humble excuses, have driven the offender from Court at once. He vowed he had merely done it to amuse the King, and meant to put her Majesty on her guard before the visit of the ambassador.

When Louis XII. left for Italy he invested Anne

with full power, of which she made most sagacious use, save in one or two instances, when she showed herself more careful of the Pope's than of the nation's interests—more so assuredly than were the clergy, and especially the Cardinal Amboise. Nevertheless her high sense of the obligations of royalty, her financial administration, and her equity, excited universal admiration.

She had reserved all her rights in Brittany, and often came to the aid of the King with her order and economy when war had exhausted his funds. She was always rich, and took pleasure in dispensing her wealth liberally. She gave pensions to captains who distinguished themselves in the King's service, and money and massive gold chains to others, irrespective of their social rank. The poor also were sharers of her munificence. Many were the charitable foundations endowed by her. She had the country's glory at heart ; she caused a man-of-war to be built at her cost, which attacked an English frigate with such fury that both the ships and all hands perished, and were never more heard of, much to the Queen's grief.

Queen Anne delighted in royal state. Blois, on a much larger scale than Amboise, was better adapted to the display of courtly splendour, consequently Anne chose it as her later residence. She inaugurated and instituted State drawing-rooms, appointed as maids-of-honour young ladies chosen from the

families of the nobility who were brought up at Court under the care of governesses selected by the Queen. Their education was carefully directed, they were accustomed to execute together needlework and embroidery, and never went out save to church, or to take the air in the castle gardens. In Court ceremonies they, with the other ladies, formed part of the Queen's circle, she taking a lively pleasure in being thus surrounded. Anne insisted moreover, on a guard-of-honour, equivalent to that of the King, comprised almost exclusively of Bretons—men of fine stature—dressed in Breton fashion. Their duty was, when the Queen left her apartments, either to go to Mass or for a walk, to wait for her on the small terrace of the Château of Blois called ‘The Breton's Perch.’ She used to say, on seeing them, ‘There are my Bretons waiting for me on their perch,’ and a glow of satisfaction flowed through her Armorican veins as she contemplated the brave sons of her duchy. As may be supposed, these noble sons of Brittany were not callous to the charms of the young maids-of-honour, nor were these intimidated by any show of admiration—always, of course, at a respectful distance, for Lady Anne's Court was of unimpeachable morality. Woe betide anyone who brought it into disrepute!

One of the maids-of-honour, Mademoiselle de Bourdeille, a niece of Brantôme, and goddaughter

of the King, as remarkable for her wit as for her beauty, was even as a child allowed to dine with their majesties, whom she amused by her ready wit. They called her their ‘little parrot.’ As she grew up, she was, of course, treated with less familiarity. Now it happened that a Franciscan friar saw her, and became enamoured of her. He frequently preached before the Queen, and in his sermons was profuse in his eulogies of the beauty of Christian virgins, gazing all the time at Mademoiselle de Bourdeille; or, when he met her in the Queen’s apartment, he would discuss theological subjects with her, still fixing the same impassioned gaze on her. The girl, annoyed by his persistent attentions, complained to her governess. The story was told to the Queen, who was incredulous, on account of his cloth and his sanctity. She kept her own counsel until the following Good Friday, when the Franciscan friar was appointed to preach. The Court was seated, the ladies and maids-of-honour being directly opposite the pulpit. The monk began his sermon, the whole theme of which was an analogy of his own sufferings with those endured by our Saviour out of love to mankind, and though he sought skilfully to disguise his allusions, they were too patent to escape the penetrating judgment of the Queen, who was justly irate at the scandal this unholy homily created. She ordered the unworthy monk

to be well flogged, to be placed in solitary confinement, and afterwards banished from Court.

Queens in those days were severe on priests forgetful of their vows.

The great grief of Anne's life was the loss of her children, of whom six were snatched from her maternal love—four the offspring of her first marriage, and two of her marriage with Louis XII. De Commines relates her touching sorrow on hearing of the death of the Dauphin, a fine boy of three. Anne left him at Amboise in perfect health, as she went to Lyons to meet Charles VIII. on his return from Italy. During her absence the child died. Anne was inconsolable, and pained to see the father, her royal spouse, receive the news with stoical philosophy. Two daughters—Claude and Renée—were spared to her. She was proud of them, superintended their education with solicitude, giving them the first masters of the day, and never naming them otherwise than ‘my daughter Claude,’ or ‘my daughter Renée,’ preferring the parental appellation to the royal title of princess.

Madame Claude, the eldest, was gentle, good, charitable, never did nor said anything unamiable ; she was simply adored by the Court, but even more so by her parents, who manifested their love by proclaiming her in the Paris Parliament Duchess of the two first duchies of Christendom — Milan and Brittany. What heiress could compete with

her? Intellectual, Madame Claude was not; she cared little for books, and left such pursuits to her sister Renée, who was naturally gifted, clever, and intelligent, and whose taste for abstruse science went so far as to make her an adept in astrology. She was acquainted with the position and virtues of each particular star, and one day she spoke so learnedly before her mother that Anne declared no philosopher could excel her daughter in argument.

But notwithstanding all her fondness for her children, and all her powers and influence, Anne could not abolish the Salic law. Louis XII. was ageing fast. Who would reign after him? into what hands would the sceptre of France fall? Anne was pursued by this thought as by a nightmare. One lady of the Court inspired her with nothing short of aversion, not so much on account of the position she held, as of the hopes she personified. This was the Princess Louise of Savoy, Duchess of Angoulême. Anne was Louise's junior by one year. She was born at the Château de Pont l'Ain, her father being Philip, Count of Bresse and Duke of Savoy; and her mother Marguerite de Bourbon, sister of the Seigneur Beaujeu. Louise was not heiress to a duchy worth a kingdom, as was Anne. Her parents were poor, and little able to protect their possessions against the encroachments and insults of their two powerful neighbours—the French King and the Emperor.

Louise was married at fourteen to the Count Charles d'Angoulême. Her marriage portion was but 35,000 crowns, and the Count was almost as poor. Great-grandson of Charles V., grandson of Valentine de Visconti, and nephew of Charles d'Orleans, he had inherited neither their qualities nor their defects. A kind husband, but a poor politician, a poet and knight, he had more affinity with his father John—of saintly memory, but of whom history had nothing to record. Count Charles and Louise lived happily together for the space of five years, sometimes at Châteauneuf, or at Chinon, or at Cognac, where their two children, Marguerite and François, were born. In 1494 the Count, journeying from Cognac to the Court, took cold, and was obliged to stop at Châteauneuf, where he became worse, and at length succumbed. His wife spared no pains; she sent for the first doctors in Christendom to attend him, and during the month of his illness never left his room, nursing him day and night with the utmost tenderness. By his will Louise was named guardian of her children and administratrix of their estates. Charles recommended her strongly to the good offices of his cousin Louis, Duke of Orleans, who acquitted himself worthily of the trust, treating her as affectionately as a brother, and doing all he could to console her and aid her in the management of her family affairs. When Louis succeeded to the French

throne, and after his marriage with Anne, Louise was frequently invited to Court, and received many costly gifts from the royal pair. When the Court residence was fixed at Blois, Amboise was given up to Louise for the education of her children. Louis XII. appointed first M. de Gié, and, on his disgrace, M. de Boissy, as tutor to François d'Angoulême.

Anne's position as Queen was, in all points save one, superior to that of Louise. Anne's sons had been carried off one after the other. Death had spared neither those of Charles VIII. nor those of Louis XII., whilst Louise, on the contrary, was the happy mother of a robust and handsome boy, full of promise, and destined to succeed to the throne. What a trial for Anne's maternal instinct and her pride! Her magnanimity of soul was not proof against it. Who was Louise of Savoy that she should be thus blessed? Her meek demeanour was but a mask to conceal her ambitious arrogance; her reserve was but to conceal her cynicism.

Do what Louise would to avoid the Queen's scrutinizing glance, and going to Court only when invited, Anne was none the less aware that at Amboise the young widow lived gaily enough, flirting with first one and then another of the officers of her guard, or with the commandant of the castle. Louise, discreet and virtuous in her married life, was now coarse in her language, dissolute in conduct,

thirsting for pleasure and greedy of gain. She was a living scandal to the austere and pious Anne, whose irrepressible jealousy increased her disapprobation to the point of aversion. This was the one drop of poison which embittered her life. Often did she represent to Louis XII. Louise's immoral conduct, hoping he would condemn and punish it. But men, to their credit, have generally a large amount of indulgence for woman's frailty, and Louis did not care to infringe on the traditional principle. He found all manner of excuses for this poor young widow's weaknesses, living in solitude at Amboise, and mother of the heir to the throne. He exhorted Anne to be less severe in her judgment, to be patient towards Louise. But patience was not among Anne's many virtues. She brooded over the widow's misconduct, nurtured antagonism towards her, and seized the first opportunity of giving vent to her anger.

In 1504, the King was taken dangerously ill, so ill that his life was despaired of. Anne, foreseeing her second widowhood, resolved to return once more to her dear Brittany. With this intention she packed off several boat-loads of valuables, such as jewels, furniture, money, etc. These boats, descending the Loire to Nantes, naturally passed Amboise. Pierre de Rohan, Marshal de Gié, governor of the castle, was at the time on the most intimate footing with

Louise. Both were expecting the news of the King's demise. The boy Francis was his successor. He was but nine years old ; Louise would be Regent. M. de Gié hated the Queen as much as the Queen hated Louise. His head being turned by the prospect of her regency, he ordered the boats to be seized, on the ground that their cargoes were a fraud committed against the rights of the Crown.

They made too sure of the King's death. To their surprise and dismay, Louis XII. recovered.

The Queen's anger on learning the outrage committed by her antagonists may well be imagined. The Marshal was driven from Court, accused of high treason, and tried at the court of Toulouse, which adhered to the Roman code, and was the most rigorous of all the courts of justice in France. Louis XII., who was attached to the Marshal, in vain begged the Queen to pardon him. The Chancellor, Guy de Rochefort, delayed the proceedings as much as possible, hoping the Queen's wrath might in time be appeased. All to no purpose ; her irritation only increased ; she sought to be avenged signally. To condemn the offender to death did not satisfy her passionate desire of punishment—it must be long, lingering—he who had dared to insult her must be ruined, degraded, and end his days in misery and distress of soul and body. Although there was no ground to implicate Louise, she, too, was not to

escape scathless. The Countess d'Angoulême, it was thought, would be dishonoured if called as a witness in defence of her lover. She was consequently summoned to the court, where she assumed an air of unconcerned innocence, gave her evidence without a symptom of discomfiture, aggravated the Marshal's situation by her statements, and thus became a party to his condemnation. She, too, was seeking revenge on her jealous lover, who, as governor of the castle, had exercised his power by shutting its gates against such young men as were his rivals; among others, against one named Surgère, whom he had dared to imprison. Louise bore these grievances in mind.

The sensational trial over, things went on pretty much as usual at Court. The rude lesson was not lost on Louise. Her prudence redoubled. Absorbed by the prospect of her son's reign, she concentrated all her thoughts and hopes in him. He would one day amply compensate her for her present sufferings. In her memoirs she scarcely mentions her daughter—the gentle and mirthful Marguerite—being entirely engrossed by anxiety for her son, from whom she expects all things.

In her memoirs she says: ‘To-day, the 12th of December, my gentle César escaped from the maternal cloister, and had his first experience of worldly pleasure at the Château of Cognac. The Queen, too, had a son, but he could not prevent the

accession of mine ; he was too weak to live.' And six years later : 'The 25th of January, 1501, Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, at two o'clock, p.m., my son's horse ran away with my king, my lord, my César, right across the fields near Amboise. Everyone was alarmed, seeing him in so great danger ; but God the Omniscient was pleased to spare my darling for the future weal of the land and for my happiness.' On another occasion Francis received a severe blow while playing with his companions, and was stunned by it. Louise writes : 'Had he been killed, what would have become of me ? The hand that struck him did so unintentionally ; but the deed was not less perilous.'

Louis XII., before his death, had conceived the idea of a marriage between his daughter Claude and François d'Angoulême, in order to secure the Duchy of Brittany to France, Anne having constituted her eldest daughter heiress of that province. The King's plan was at once politic and patriotic ; but the Queen refused to give her daughter to the son of the woman she abhorred. Her Breton heart cared little for the interests of France ; she would a thousand times rather marry Claude to the son of her platonic spouse, for whom she had still a lingering weakness. Claude should marry Charles of Austria, the future Charles Quint.

Yet, had this dream been fulfilled, it would have

given the enemy a footing in the very heart of the kingdom. Louis XII., though alive to the danger, did not oppose the Queen's wishes, but referred the matter to the States. They assembled at Tours, and unanimously adopted his views, and demanded that a marriage should be concluded between Claude and François d'Angoulême.

The Queen was reduced to silent submission ; she consented to the preliminary agreement. The young people were not of age to marry ; besides, she herself at thirty-two might yet have a son.

Fate, alas ! is often unjust and unkind. The Queen's wish for an heir was not realized, and she was taken from her trials and her hopes after a few days' illness. She died at Blois on the 9th January, 1514. Her last moments were perhaps embittered by the knowledge of her rival's triumph ; but, ever earnest in her religion and piety, she sacrificed her enmity on the altar of faith, and clasping the crucifix to her breast, she gave her hearty consent to the marriage of her beloved Claude with François ; and, in token of her perfect self-abnegation, she left the administration of the estates bequeathed to her daughter Claude to her future mother-in-law during Claude's minority.

Anne's death was a terrible blow to the King ; he had never supposed he should survive her, she was so much the younger and stronger of the pair.

He mourned her loss sincerely ; accompanied her body first to the church of St. Sauveur at Blois, and afterwards followed the funeral to St. Denis, where a superb monument in white marble was erected to her memory over the vault. The Court wore mourning for several months. Even at the marriage of François and Claude, celebrated in the following month of May, the bride and bridegroom were both attired in black cloth, and the church and altar were draped with black.

Certainly the King's grief was sincere ; nevertheless, whether from a feeling of jealousy towards the heir-presumptive of the Crown, or simply from a craving for a new domestic tie, many months had not elapsed since Anne's death when the world was surprised by the report of the King's re-marriage with a young Princess of sixteen, sister of the King of England.

The Duke of Longueville, then a prisoner in England, had negotiated the affair, which was not devoid of political importance. Louis XII., unsuccessful in his Italian campaign, had signed a truce with Ferdinand, Maximilian, and the Pope, giving up the Duchy of Milan. He wished to conclude peace on similar terms with England. The Princess Mary was the pledge of reconciliation. Moreover, the King still longed for a direct heir. This marriage was anything but agreeable to Louise ;

but, accustomed to disguise her feelings, she appeared pleased, and went to greet the new Queen with all the outward semblance of cordial goodwill.

Mary landed at Calais with a numerous retinue of nobles and dames, and a company of two hundred archers of Henry VIII.'s guard. MM. de Vendôme and de la Trémouille went to receive her on her disembarkation. Louis XII., with his Court, awaited her outside Abbeville. He embraced her tenderly, though on horseback, and re-entered the town with her. The marriage ceremony was performed the next day in the cathedral of that place. M. d'Angoulême presented the offering to the King. Madame Claude performed the same office to the Queen, with what feelings may be imagined, as she had but recently presented the offering to the mother. The coronation took place at St. Denis, and Paris was *en fête* for some days after, and mourning was discarded.

The Count d'Angoulême, impetuous and inflammable by nature, was seized with enthusiastic admiration of the young bride, and, perfectly indifferent to the probable loss of the throne, thought of nothing but of distinguishing himself in her presence. His mother, watching his every look, was filled with anxiety as she contemplated the young and blooming Princess at the altar beside the aged and feeble King. At the sight of him her hopes revive, and a sarcastic

smile plays upon her lips. What if her son should fall over head and ears in love with the English Princess ! At all costs she must prevent such an imprudence ; no precaution must be overlooked, and from the first day she takes upon herself the guardianship of Mary.

Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, raised to that rank by Henry VIII., also paid marked attention to Mary before her marriage, and was one of her escorts to France. Louise keeps a watchful eye on him as well. A Queen of France, according to established etiquette, could not be left alone, and Madame d'Aumont, her lady-of-honour, had orders never to leave her.

Louise's previsions were fulfilled. Six weeks after this marriage, Louis XII. fell mortally ill. On his death-bed he acknowledged his folly, and all his affection revived for her whose memory he had so lightly offended. His last thoughts were for his true spouse Anne. He ordered his coffin to be placed beside hers, that they might thus be eternally united.

On the 1st of January, 1515, Louise could at length triumphantly exclaim, ' My son is King ! What a recompense for all the trials and adversities of my youth !'

CHAPTER III.

THE WARS IN ITALY—FRANCIS I.—HIS PORTRAIT—
BEGINNING OF HIS REIGN.

THE wars in Italy, which fill the pages of French history from the beginning of Charles VIII.'s reign to the end of Francis I.'s, had a twofold origin. First, the pretensions of the house of Anjou to the Kingdom of Naples ; secondly, those of the house of Valois to the Duchy of Milan.

In the eleventh century, Robert Guiscard, of the Norman family of Hauteville, at the head of a band of adventurers, took possession of Sicily and South Italy, then in a state of complete anarchy. Roger, the son of Robert, founded the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies under the Pope's suzerainty. In 1189 the Guiscard family became extinct, whereupon the German Emperor laid claim to the kingdom in right of his wife Constance, daughter of one of the Norman kings. The Roman Pontiffs, dreading such powerful neighbours, were adverse to the

arrangement, and in 1254 King Conrad, being succeeded by his son Conradin, still a minor, furnished a pretext for bestowing the crown of the Two Sicilies on Charles d'Anjou, brother of St. Louis.

Manfred, guardian of the boy Conaddin, and a natural son of the Emperor Frederick II., raised an army against Charles d'Anjou, but was defeated, and fell in the encounter of 1266. Two years later, Prince Conaddin was cruelly beheaded in Naples. Before his death, however, he made a will, by which he invested Peter III. of Aragon, son-in-law of Manfred, with full power over the Two Sicilies, exhorting him to avenge his death.

This bequest was the origin of the rivalry between the houses of Aragon and Anjou, a rivalry which developed into open antagonism when the island of Sicily was given up to Peter of Aragon and his descendants, while Charles d'Anjou still held Naples for himself and his heirs.

In 1435 Joan II., Queen of Naples, bequeathed her estates to Alfonso V. of Aragon, surnamed the Magnanimous, to the exclusion of Louis III. of Anjou. After a long and bloody struggle, Alfonso succeeded in driving the Anjou dynasty out of Naples. Louis III. was the last representative of this once-powerful family. He returned to France, survived his defeat two-and-twenty years, and by his will left all his rights to the Count of

Maine, his nephew, who, on his death, transferred them to Louis XI. The wily Louis was not tempted to claim this worthless legacy. His successor, Charles VIII., less matter - of - fact, and more romantic, was beguiled into a series of brilliant, though sterile, expeditions, disastrous to national interests, neglecting the Flemish provinces, the liege vassals of France, and thoroughly French at heart. Charles VIII. put himself at the head of his nobles, made a triumphal entry into Naples, and returned without having gained an inch of territory. De Commines judges the whole affair a mystery ; it was, in fact, one of those dazzling and chivalrous adventures with which the French delighted to astonish Europe.

Louis XII., like Charles VIII., proclaimed his right to Naples, and also to the Duchy of Milan, inherited from his grandmother, Valentine de Visconti. These pretended rights were more than doubtful. The Emperor Wenceslas, on conferring the duchy on the Viscontis, excluded women from the inheritance, and both Louis XI. and Charles VIII. recognised the validity of the Salic law in Milan by concluding an alliance with the Sforzas. The seventeen years of Louis XII.'s reign were absorbed in these Italian wars, in which the French invariably began by victory, and as invariably ended in defeat. The League of Cambrai, the Battles of

Agnadel, Ravenna, Novara, the Treaties of Grenada and Blois, are the principal episodes of this unlucky campaign.

Francis I. ascended the throne on the 1st of January, 1515. Bayard tells us that the French nobility were in raptures over the young King, just twenty years of age, the handsomest prince in the universe. Strong and graceful, his countenance was brightened by a remarkable openness of expression.

As he had shown himself as a boy at Amboise the boldest and most enterprising among his fellows, attracted by danger, adoring adventures even to foolhardiness, first and foremost in every wild prank, such Francis remained throughout his life, and years had no sobering effect on his buoyant nature. Practical good sense utterly failed him, even where his interests were concerned ; but he had as compensation a frank, generous, chivalrous soul, an instinctive sympathy with all that was lovely, which raised him above the vulgar level. Always under the empire of versatile impressions, his life was one series of illusions and deceptions, and his reign is a chapter of the maddest and strangest contradictions. As Prince, none ever committed so many faults or engendered so many ills and so much misery. Nevertheless, his underlying good faith, tinged by the poetry of the Middle Ages, disarms the severest moralist.

After the rejoicings and tournaments which marked

his accession to the throne, Francis, with the fixed idea of continuing the struggle with the Empire, renewed the alliance with England and Venice, and entered Italy to recapture the Duchy of Milan. He won his first laurels on the field of Marignan. The first encounter happened on the 13th of September, in the afternoon, lasting until darkness put a stop to the struggle. Francis remained armed *cap-à-pie* during the night, taking what sleep he could on the carriage of a cannon.

An hour before daybreak, the chief of the artillery, Galiot de Genouillac, called the chamberlain Boisréné, warning him that it was high time to wake the King. Boisréné lost no time in rousing Francis, who sprang up at once, mounted his horse, and inspected the troops; then, taking a few men with him, he went noiselessly to the spot where the Swiss soldiers had encamped for the night, and were leisurely warming themselves round a large fire. ‘Hallo!’ he exclaimed softly; ‘here are the fellows!’ Then, hastily surveying the ground, he took note of all the ways and byways by which the Swiss could throw themselves on his army, and returning to the camp, directed Galiot de Genouillac where and how to point his guns.

As soon as day dawned, the sound of three cow-horns was heard in the distance. The lansquenets informed the King that this was the war-signal of the Swiss.

The King was everywhere, exciting and encouraging his men. The attack was even more furious than that of the evening before, and continued with unabated violence till sunset. Of the thirty-five thousand Swiss engaged, fourteen or fifteen thousand were slain; of the survivors, numbers were taken prisoners; the remainder fled. But on the French side the flower of the nobility had fallen, although Francis was not even wounded. In the flush of victory, he was dubbed knight on the field by Bayard, to whose courage he thus did homage. On this occasion Francis wrote to his mother.

‘MADAM,

‘In order that you may be fully acquainted with the details of the battle, I write to tell you that yesterday, at one o’clock after noon, our watchguard at the gates of Milan warned us that the Swiss were sallying forth from the city to attack us. Our lansquenets immediately ranged themselves in order of battle, the men-at-arms to the front. The Swiss were in three divisions. Feeling the fire of our artillery, they withdrew to a covered position, from which they burst out in fury on our flank, but were repulsed with such vigour that their infantry was greatly discomfited, and the clouds of dust were so dense that one could not see; furthermore, night was at hand, and, consequently, some disorder ensued. By God’s grace, I

was on that side with the men who drove them back, and I assure you, madam, that our two hundred men routed at least four thousand Swiss, and, brave though they were, compelled them to lay down their arms and shout “France,” whereon they threw their pikes in our faces to prove they were no friends to us ; and, but for a ray of moonlight, the confusion would have been so great we should not have been able to distinguish friends from foes. The struggle lasted from three in the afternoon until between eleven and twelve at night, when—the moon failing—we rallied our men, and the artillery withdrew. The Swiss encamped so close to us that we were only separated by a ditch. We remained on horseback all night, all armed, and our men, rank and file, ready to renew the fight. As I was the nearest to the enemy, I was on the constant watch to prevent a surprise, and at dawn I, with two gentlemen and the chief of artillery, quitted our entrenchments, and the battle began, and lasted until two o’clock to-day, without either side being victorious. I assure you, madam, our infantry measured their lances with the Swiss pikes, and our men-at-arms were as nimble as hares ; in bodies of five hundred they charged at least thirty times in succession, and so, at last, the battle was won. It was well fought. The people of Ravenna declare that for two thousand years there never was a combat so brave nor so bloody.

‘As for the rest, madam, order a national thanksgiving for the victory which it has pleased God to grant us. Madam, my earnest prayer is that the Creator may lend you a long and happy life.

‘Written at the camp of S^{te} Brigitte, Friday, the fourteenth day of September, 1515.

‘Your most humble and obedient son,

‘FRANCIS.’

The King of France made his solemn entry into Milan on the 16th October following, on horseback, under a canopy borne by the principal inhabitants. His Majesty wore a habit of blue velvet, embroidered with fleurs-de-lis, and a black velvet cap on his head. He remained under the canopy, with an air of great dignity, and looked every inch a prince.

M. d’Alençon, M. de Savoie, and the other princes followed, and behind them came the nobility of the country, and the King’s Chamberlains in black, white, and tan-coloured costumes, after which came the French nobles, such as Saint-Vallier, Bayard, Théigny, etc.

His Majesty dismounted at the cathedral. The guns fired a salute, and all the French wept for joy. The windows on either side of the streets were crowded with ladies, and, to judge from the tender glances of their beautiful eyes, they preferred the French to Maximilian and his companions.

The treaty giving over the Duchy of Milan to France was signed on the 14th October, 1515. In October of the following year the King, pursuing his triumphal march, entered Bologna, being reconciled with the Pope, who, since the battle of Marignan, was not on good terms with the Emperor. The Venetian Ambassador, Giorgi, tells us : ‘Pope Leo X. delights in learning. He is a classical scholar, and thoroughly up in canonical law, besides which he is an accomplished musician. The King is enchanted with his brilliant conversation and his effusive approval. He is as deferential as a son in his demeanour towards the Pope, and when he appears at church, two cardinal archbishops holding his robe, he is followed by the Chancellor and baron all dressed in cloth of gold.

‘When the Pope goes up to the altar the King seats himself on a stool at its foot ; at the Communion he presents the water and napkin to his Holiness. They have frequent interviews, are on the most amicable footing, and have concluded a strong alliance with each other. In exchange for Parma and Piacenza, united to Milan, the King promises protection to all the Medicis, whom he loads with favours and pensions, guaranteeing Florence to them, and marrying his young aunt Philiberte of Savoy to the Pope’s brother Julian, on whom he confers the Duchy of Nemours.’

Pending these transactions, Chancellor Duprat was negotiating with the first Roman ministers the conditions of the Concordat destined to replace the Pragmatic Sanction in France.

The treaty was signed in February, 1516, and Francis I., having appointed the Constable de Bourbon his representative in Italy, hurried back to France to offer to his mother, who acted as Regent during his absence, the homage of his victories. Accompanied by the timid, gentle Claude, Louise went to meet her son at Lyons.

At length Louise's ambition was gratified ; she was henceforth sure of her ascendancy. Francis I. was a woman-worshipper ; he adored his mother : his confidence in her, his respect and deference towards her, were inalienable. He continued the same chivalrous knight in his bearing towards her as when at fifteen he walked by her litter from Cognac to Angoulême, chatting gaily with her to beguile the way. Alas ! this sentiment, in itself a virtue, had in his case all the evil results of a vice.

Some months after the battle of Marignan, Ferdinand the Catholic left the throne of Spain to his grandson, Charles of Austria, already the ruler of Flanders. Charles's crown was not without thorns, so he sought to smooth difficulties by an alliance with the King of France, and signed the Treaty of Noyon, 13th August, 1516, which was

to be made still more binding by Charles's marriage with the Princess Louise of France, an engagement to which Maximilian gave his consent on the 8th October following.

A short-lived peace ! Alas ! antagonistic elements were rife in Europe. The fatal rivalry between Charles V. and Francis I. was destined to be the signal of a struggle which occupied the first half of the sixteenth century. Both presented themselves as competitors for the Empire. Charles's house had already furnished six German Emperors, whereas Francis was a total stranger to the country. After endless intrigues on both sides, Charles was elected on the 5th July, 1519, thereby provoking a breach which time would never heal.

Giustiniani says the two princes were a complete contrast. At nineteen Charles was a man of mature judgment. Strictly brought up by the Seigneur of Chièvres, whom the Flemish municipalities had appointed his governor, Charles was initiated from his youth into the management of State matters, all documents from the provinces being taken to him for inspection, and it was he who brought them before the council, and was present at all its deliberations. At the same time his temperament was more suited to study than to field exercises. Of middle height, of weakly constitution, slow and sparing of speech, he lived to himself, ever ruminat-

ing on serious things. He had no taste for games or physical exercise. His long face, sallow complexion, and heavy hanging lips made him look older than he was.

The election once decided, the two rivals silently made preparations for war, each being eager to secure useful alliances. The most valuable of all was that of the young King Henry VIII. of England, who had just come to the throne. The question was, who would secure the prize? Francis sent Admiral Bonnivet to England, and an interview between the monarchs was arranged to take place on the confines of English territory and French ground near Calais, Henry making his headquarters at Guines, Francis at Ardres. Both the Kings were glad of the occasion for the meeting, and determined to celebrate it by much feasting.

Magnificent preparations were made. Francis I., who delighted in splendour, resolved to receive his guest right royally. Such a brilliant display of luxury had never been seen—tents in cloth of gold were pitched throughout the plain, hung in the interior with gold and silver brocades, embellished with mottoes and a variety of ornamental designs. The King's tent was distinguished by a great golden statue of St. Michael on the top—*hollow*, it must be owned, but making, nevertheless, a wonderfully dazzling effect when illuminated by a bright sun.

Henry VIII.'s tent, pitched outside the gateway of Guines, was much less sumptuous—made only of wood, canvas, and glass, but of such fine glass as had never before been seen, letting in broad daylight everywhere. The camp consisted of four buildings, each capacious enough to accommodate a prince, erected round a square, in the centre of which were two fountains with three different pipes, from which flowed water, wine, and hypocras. A chapel was annexed of exceeding beauty, filled with reliques and jewelled shrines. The cellars were not forgotten, as both princes were to keep open house during their stay, and banqueting was the order of the day.

The ceremonial of the first meeting was not easily settled for three or four days previous. Heralds were constantly passing from one camp to the other, raising delicate points, and creating endless obstacles; such minute precautions were more fitted for receiving an enemy or a traitor.

At length the day was fixed—Sunday, 9th June, 1520, or, according to Martin du Bellay, 10th June, the Fête Dieu. Between the two camps a handsome tent was pitched, surrounded by palisades; with a tennis-court close by. On each side of the tent opposite Ardres and Guines, three hundred English archers formed the French King's guard, and four hundred French archers that of Henry VIII.

Both Kings advanced at the head of their respective guards, these last remaining outside the palisades, whilst the Kings, each accompanied by two of their nobles—Henry by the Dukes of Suffolk and Norfolk, Francis by M. de Bourbon and the Admiral Bonnivet—entered the square; a secretary being also attached to each cavalcade. Both monarchs were of imposing presence, and superbly mounted. They embraced each other on horseback, but at that moment Henry's horse stumbled. This prelude over, they dismounted and entered the camp, where they again embraced, then took their places at table, and did due honour to the wines and viands.

The King of England at once took up the draft and began to read the articles of the treaty. After reciting the various titles of the King of France, he was on the point of enumerating his own—‘I, Henry, King of France and England’—when he courteously paused and said to Francis, ‘I will not say “of France” here in your presence: it would be a lie;’ merely recited, ‘I, Henry, King of England.’ The conditions of the treaty were fair and well worded, if only they had been faithfully kept. The reading of the treaty ended, the two sovereigns separated, each highly satisfied with the other. Francis returned to Ardres, Henry to Guines. In the course of the evening, parleys were renewed. The monarchs

wished to see more of each other, but strict formalities were enforced. Then the two Queens were anxious to become acquainted, and it was proposed that during their interview the Kings should be held as hostages. Such precautions irritated Francis ; this manifest mistrust galled his chivalrous spirit. Early one morning he determined to break through the restrictions. Unarmed, and accompanied by two of his gentlemen, he rode to the Castle of Guines, where Henry lodged. The drawbridge was guarded by two hundred English archers, who were surprised at sight of Francis, and still more on his inquiring where the King's apartment was, as he had come to call on him. The governor of the castle, who was with the archers, replied, 'Sire, he is not awake yet.' Francis took no heed of this answer, but pushed his way forward, knocked at the door of the King's room, and entered without pausing. Henry, aroused from his slumbers, started suddenly up, and exclaimed, 'Brother, you have done me the best turn ever man did by this proof of confidence which I have in you and you in me. I declare myself your prisoner from this hour, and place all faith in you.' So saying, he unclasped a collar of the value of 15,000 angels, which he wore, begging the King of France to accept and wear it out of affection for his prisoner. Francis accepted the gift, and in exchange placed on Henry's arm a

bracelet (worth 30,000 angels), which he had brought with him expressly. Henry then rose, and Francis, acting the part of valet, presented him his shirt. Henry pressed Francis to remain and dine with him, but the offer was necessarily refused, as Francis was to take part in a tilting match ; so they parted on the most friendly terms.

Francis, on his return, was met by several of his courtiers—amongst others, Fleurange—all in the greatest anxiety.

Fleurange accosted the truant King. ‘Sire,’ said he, ‘the devil take the man who advised you to commit this rash act !’

‘No one advised me,’ replied Francis. ‘There is not a man in my kingdom who would have dared ;’ and on the road back he told Fleurange all that had happened.

The next day Henry returned Francis’s visit, precisely in the same unceremonious fashion ; thus the ice was broken, and feastings and amusements were cordially interchanged. Tilting was the favourite sport, and there were many very fine matches, both on horseback and on foot. On the King’s side were princes and captains, and each had ten or twelve pursuivants dressed in their colours. The theatre of these tournaments was enclosed by a barrier, and when the monarchs and their retainers were within the circle, the side of Francis was

guarded by English archers, and the French captains, archers, and Swiss guarded that of Henry. All but those engaged in the lists were excluded. When one set was tired, another replaced it in good order, without dispute or confusion, and the chronicler assures us that it was a goodly sight.

The tilt over, wrestlers succeeded, and performed before the King and the ladies present. The prize was gained by some men from Brittany, who were brought expressly for the occasion. Then there was an archery match, in which Henry distinguished himself. These diversions ended, the two Kings withdrew to a tent, where they indulged in copious libations. One day Henry, having drunk deeply, seized Francis by the collar, saying at the same time :

‘ Brother, let us try our strength in wrestling,’ and forthwith opened the attack.

Now, Henry was short of stature, and already somewhat stout. Francis, on the contrary, was tall, strong and dexterous. With one turn of his wrist he threw Henry. It is said that this victory was unfortunate for the alliance.

The rejoicings continued for several days after—festivities of all kinds, banquets, balls, and sports ; the English and French ladies exchanged frequent visits. One day the whole of the two Courts assembled in one tent. Before separating, the

English Cardinal celebrated High Mass before an altar erected on the tournament ground, the choristers of both nations chanting together. At the close of this solemnity, heralds proclaimed the treaty of peace. It was further rumoured that a marriage would take place between the Dauphin and the English Princess, both being infants at the time. Then came the final banquet, an exchange of presents, and all returned whence they had come.

Francis, with his expansive, confiding nature, left Ardres delighted with himself and with everybody else, and as he rode along the Amboise road he passed in review all the details of the fête in which he had appeared only to shine and conquer. All had gone off superlatively well.

Henry returned to England with a less roseate impression. Jealousy gnawed at his heart; his royal brother had surpassed him in every way in the pomp and luxury he had displayed, his skill at arms and in sports, in the adulation of his courtiers, and in his successes with the fair sex. Not long after the Emperor landed at Dover on a visit to Henry. Charles had neither the physical beauty nor the brilliant wit of Francis, but he knew how to flatter Henry. He gained over Cardinal Wolsey by promising him the triple crown and endowing him with a pension of seven thousand ducats, levied on two Spanish bishoprics. The alliance, which Francis

deemed secure, was being undermined. A friendly meeting followed between Charles V. and Henry at Gravelines. Francis I. was too elated by his souvenirs of the Field of the Cloth of Gold to give a thought to anything less agreeable. He was occupied in excursions and amusements, making merry with his young friends, while Charles was secretly forwarding his own ambitious designs.

One day in the course of the following winter, as Francis was on his way from Amboise to Romorantin, accompanied by a gay cavalcade, he heard that M. de St. Pol, a Bourbon Prince, having drawn the bean in the Twelfth-Night revels, had amused himself by being crowned king. Francis enjoyed the joke, and made up his mind to follow it up. A herald was despatched with a challenge to the sham king, accusing him of insulting his liege lord, who was about to besiege his castle. The weather was cold. The besieged provided himself in all haste with ammunition, in the shape of snowballs, apples, and eggs. The King soon appeared ; the assault began ; the besieged retaliated. A log of wood thrown from a window fell on the King's head with such force that he was stunned, some thought killed, by the blow ; in fact, he lay several days in danger, but magnanimously forbade any inquiry as to who threw the wood, adding, 'that since he had started the farce, it was but right he should share the risk.'

However, there soon came a turn in the tide of Francis's hitherto good fortune. What he had won by his valour he lost by his political errors. Henry VIII., irritated by his attitude in Scotch affairs, no longer hesitated in the choice of his ally. The newly-conquered town of Tournai was driven to rebellion by the suppression of its local freedom. The Venetians, old allies of France, were alienated by his haughty treatment, and his neglect of his ally, Leo X., gave the Pope a pretext for making an alliance with the Emperor in the hope of regaining possession of Piacenza and Parma, and of stamping out the newly-developed Reformation in Germany.

At home affairs were not more brilliant. The Concordat abolishing the Pragmatic Sanction destroyed all the liberties of the Gallican Church, of which the Pope and King had shared the spoils with cynical audacity. By the Pragmatic Sanction the Pope was subordinate to periodical General Councils; the free election of bishops, abbots, priors was guaranteed to chapters and communities, the last vestige of the time-honoured custom by which the people had a voice in the choice of their spiritual masters; and, finally, the various extortions, known as *annates*, *réserves*, and *expectatives*, by which a great part of the ecclesiastical revenues of France went to fill the Roman coffers, were suppressed. The Concordat abolished all such privileges and exemptions, invested

the King with the right of appointing bishops and disposing of Church benefices, under the Papal sanction, but revived the greater part of the onerous exactions of Rome. No allusion was made to councils—they were altogether ignored; thus the independence and autonomy of the Gallican Church, with its venerable traditions, received a fatal blow. From one end of the country to the other the greatest discontent prevailed, and as the treaty required Parliamentary sanction to become absolute, a life and death struggle ensued. The university, the magistracy, the clergy protested vehemently, and demanded a National Council; the population of old Paris was in fermentation, tumultuous meetings were held in churches, cloisters, and schools; from the pulpit the new treaty was denounced in violent language, and the people were excited to resistance. The King refused all concession, and threatened coercion. Parliament refused to register the treaty. Magistrates were persecuted and thrown into gaol, until at length, wearied by the useless fight, a year later the pernicious deed was duly registered, but with a strong denunciation of the violence by which this act had been wrested from Parliament, accompanied by an appeal for redress by a future council. Nevertheless, a legal resistance was partially maintained, inasmuch as certain chapters and communities continued to make their elections regardless of the Concordat, and when

subpoenaed to answer for their obstinacy in a court of justice, courageously supported their candidates in opposition to those nominated by the Crown, whereupon the King solved the difficulty by transferring such suits to the Grand Council. The financial state of the country, moreover, was disastrous. Louise's greed of wealth, which she accumulated, together with her son's lavish prodigality and reckless extravagance, had completely drained the State treasury ; hence a series of unpopular measures, such as the arbitrary increase of taxation, the sale of judicial offices, and the creation of new ones for the sake of gain, the revocation of reversions, and the prohibition against alienating Crown property.

Assailed by these complicated troubles, Francis, without any plausible motive, declared war against the Emperor, though wholly unprepared for such a struggle, which was prolonged throughout the summer of 1521. The French forces in the north were decimated by numerous inglorious engagements without any definite result ; in the south the disasters were even greater. The armies, under the command of three brothers of Madame de Châteaubriand —Lesparre in Spain, Lautrec and Lescun in Italy —failed under such generals to achieve any victory.

The kingdom of Navarre, comprising Spanish and French Navarre, after having long been in the De Foix family, passed into that of D'Albret by

Catherine de Foix's marriage with Jean d'Albret, a pious and devout prince, who attended two or three masses daily, but was no warrior. In 1512 he allowed Ferdinand to seize his Spanish province without raising a finger in defence of his rights, and retired miserably to Béarn, at which his spirited wife exclaimed, 'If you had been Catherine and I Jean, we should still be Kings of Navarre.' Their son, Henri d'Albret, as courageous and valorous as his mother, inherited the throne four years afterwards, at fourteen years of age. Thanks to his cousin, Madame de Châteaubriand (Françoise de Foix), he obtained a contingent of six thousand men from Francis, in order to reconquer his lost dominion. Lesparre was appointed to the command of the troops, on account of the King's youthfulness. Henry fought by the general's side. The Spanish province had been dismantled by Ximenes, as he distrusted the inhabitants, who remained attached to their princes; consequently it was an easy conquest for Henry. The Spaniards at the time, absorbed by their quarrels between the nobles and the commoners, would gladly have come to terms with the family, so much the more so as they considered Navarre a foreign province; but the vain and frivolous Lesparre spoilt all by attacking Castile, with the wild notion it could be annexed as easily as Navarre. He was, of course, attacked, defeated,

and driven back over the Pyrenees. Lautrec and Lescun showed no more wisdom in Italy. After the return of the Constable of Bourbon to France, Lautrec remained governor of the Duchy of Milan. His despotism and his exactions rendered him so odious, that the whole province was disposed in favour of Pescaire, commissioned by Leo X. to attack it. Lautrec, who had neither men nor money, hurried to Paris for succour. The King promised faithfully to send him a body of Swiss soldiers and four thousand crowns for their pay. In the interim the Pope died, his army was dispersed, and the winter passed without hostilities; but in the spring (1552) the contest recommenced, Lautrec still on the tenter-hooks of expectation for the promised funds. The Swiss were furious, and clamoured for their pay, or, in default, demanded a battle. Lautrec, intimidated by their threats, yielded under the most disadvantageous circumstances, and the disastrous battle of La Bicoque was fought on the 29th April, 1522. Furious at being defeated, he rushed to Paris to have an explanation with the King, leaving the troops under the command of his brother Lescun, who was surprised and defeated, and the French evacuated Lombardy.

In Paris, Lautrec vainly sought an audience of the King. His Majesty refused to see him; Lautrec related his troubles to his friend, the

Constable of Bourbon, who immediately suspected Louise, on account of her hatred of Lautrec, brother of her rival in her son's affections, Madame de Châteaubriand. He offered to mediate with the King, who consented at last to an interview with Lautrec, in which Francis, giving vent to his anger, reproached the General with the loss of the Duchy of Milan, his inheritance. Lautrec retorted that his Majesty had lost it, and recalled the promise of money which had not been fulfilled ; whereupon the King vowed that the order to send four thousand crowns had been given to Semblançay, his Finance Minister, and that surely they must have been sent. Lautrec swore they never arrived ; Semblançay was summoned, who admitted he had received the King's commands, but that Madame la Régente had intercepted the money.

Francis's anger overcame his filial respect. He hurried to his mother's apartment, and reproached her with the injury done him by her retention of the money destined for his troops. Madame Louise denied the fact. Semblançay, in her presence, proved it to be true. She changed her tactics, and pretended that the sum was really hers, and a part of her revenues left in the Treasury. Again Semblançay flatly contradicted the statement. The King, shocked at such a discussion with his mother, abruptly ended it, and ordered a commission of

inquiry to decide the matter. Duprat, the Chancellor, and a creature of the Regent's, appointed the commissioners exclusively from among the Queen's friends, all intent on proving Semblançay in the wrong. Disappointed in their efforts, they made a muddle of the affair, which was prolonged indefinitely. After the battle of Pavia, Louise, taking advantage of her power as Regent, dismissed Semblançay, and then ordered his arrest. He was sent to the Bastille on a vague accusation of embezzlement, and condemned to death.

Just when this iniquitous sentence was pronounced, Francis, released from prison, resumed the reins of government. Weary, weak, and ruled by his mother, he allowed the greatest crime of his reign to be perpetrated under his eyes. Semblançay, at eighty-two years of age, was hanged at Montfaucon on the 9th of August, 1527. He was, perhaps, the only honest member of the Court, and was held in such veneration by his royal master that he was wont to style him *father*.

The young and beautiful Duchess d'Usez bore this in memory, and one day, when the King playfully named her *his daughter*, to his surprise she burst into tears, and when he inquired what moved her so—

‘Sire,’ she answered, ‘after the way in which you treated your *father*, what can your *daughter* expect?’

The King was embarrassed, the Regent angry ; but Madame d'Usez was not a person to be silenced.

To return to 1522. Francis I., isolated in Europe by his many faults, had still one more, the gravest of all, to commit. Rushing blindly on to his fate, overruled by his mother and misled by his own want of justice, Francis alienated a prince of the blood of energetic character, a general of rare military ability, whose defection entailed endless misfortunes on the State.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CONSTABLE OF BOURBON.

THE house of Bourbon was a younger branch of the royal family of France, descended in direct line from St. Louis. In 1408 Charles VI., the head of that branch, stipulated by his will that, in default of male heirs, the possessions of that house should revert to the Crown.

Sixty years later, in Louis XI.'s time, the Duke de Bourbon, Lord of Beaujeu, the head of his house, whose only child was Suzanne, ignored this provision, and, in defiance of feudal law, and contrary to his ancestor's will, made his daughter heiress of his estates. Louis XI., his father-in-law, and Charles VIII., his brother-in-law, ratified the arrangement; against which Count Gilbert de Montpensier, of the younger Bourbon branch, protested energetically—indeed, it seemed doubtful that French kings could abrogate a testamentary clause in favour of

the Crown, and, undoubtedly, they had no power to abolish feudal rights by diverting an inheritance.

On this argument the junior members of the family based their protestation, and a rupture ensued between the two branches, the junior refusing a compromise through an inter-marriage. Duke Pierre was annoyed, and betrothed his daughter, still a child, to the duke D'Alençon, of the collateral branch of the Valois family, descended from Philip III.

Count Gilbert, who followed Charles VIII. to Italy, was named Viceroy of Naples, and in 1496 he died of the plague at Puzzuoli. His son Louis was carried off by the same disease at Naples. Gilbert's wife, Clara de Gonzaga, survived her husband and her eldest son but a short time; so the junior branch came to be represented by Charles, the second son of Gilbert, born in 1490, who had remained in France under the guardianship of his brother-in-law, M. de Chauvigny. When he was thirteen, Duke Pierre, who lived with his wife, Anne of France, on his Bourbon estates, sent for the boy to their Castle of Chaussière; and a fine, intelligent youth he was. The Duke and Duchess soon became attached to him, and begged M. de Chauvigny (whose wife, Louise de Bourbon, daughter of Gilbert, had been brought up by Anne) to leave young Charles with them to be educated.

Not long after, while preparations were being made for the espousals of Suzanne and the Duke d'Alençon, Pierre de Bourbon died. The *fiancé*, on his arrival from Normandy, found funeral rites instead of marriage festivities.

He was anxious, nevertheless, to secure the heiress and her property; but the Duchess, who had already other views, pleaded her mourning. The Prince was forced to return to Normandy, and the marriage was indefinitely postponed.

The Duchess was indeed much attached to the young Count Charles, who, educated under her eye, afforded her infinite satisfaction. He learnt Latin readily, and was both dexterous and brave in all athletic sports and military exercises. It was a pleasure to see him wield a lance, spur a horse, draw a bow, or fly a hawk ; and he carried himself proudly, and with such grace, that the Duchess came to think he would make a more satisfactory son-in-law than the Duke d'Alençon.

Brought up near her, he knew her habits and delighted in her society ; he would be willing to remain in her country, where the manners of the people were so gentle and pleasant, whereas the Duke d'Alençon would prefer to return to Normandy, and would, no doubt, enrich his house at the expense of the Bourbons.

Moreover, Anne was fond of managing affairs.

Count Charles, an orphan, looked on her as his mother. He would not interfere, but would leave her sovereign mistress. The Duke d'Alençon's mother, on the contrary, would instigate her son to be on his guard against Anne. He would be ruled, too, by his cunning, contentious Norman dependents ; whilst Charles was known and beloved throughout the Bourbonnais, all the States of which longed to have him at their head.

Anne bore these facts in mind. Her plans were approved and upheld by Louise, Charles's sister, the widow of M. de Chauvigny, who spent the winter with her. She never lost an opportunity, by covert hints and innuendoes (understood by Anne, though neither entered into an explanation), to make known her hopes and wishes for her dear brother. There were complications, however, which rendered the situation perplexing. Louis XII. had given his royal sanction to Suzanne's marriage with the Duke d'Alençon—he had even honoured the betrothal by his presence. Would he withdraw that approval because, by the proposed change, the vast riches of the Bourbon family would be centred in one person ? M. de Graville, Admiral of France, did his utmost to convince the King of the danger of the project. So Anne was obliged to employ all her intelligence to circumvent Louis XII. She was not Louis XI.'s daughter for nothing. The Queen (Anne of Brit-

tany) was her ally. She had always had a weakness for the house of Bourbon, and respected the Duchess's character and conduct. The slight misunderstandings between the two during Charles VIII.'s minority were forgotten, inasmuch as the Duchess had the tact and good sense to surrender her authority to her sister-in-law.

As may be supposed, these two ladies were more than a match for the Admiral, and the King gave his consent. The Duchess immediately despatched two of her gentlemen to inform the Duke d'Alençon that the clergy, counts, barons, gentlemen, burghers and peasants of her estates had entreated her to agree to a marriage between her daughter Suzanne and Count Charles, who was their fellow countryman, and bore their name, and it was impossible for her to oppose the general wish. Now, the Duke d'Alençon's father had been the most stirring, quarrelsome man of his time, and in truth he had taken part in every movement of the preceding reigns. He used to say he should consider himself dishonoured if he were not present in any revolt that might arise in the country. His son was the very reverse—the quietest, meekest of beings, dreading nothing so much as a dispute or a misunderstanding. He accepted Anne of Bourbon's message in good part, and the match was broken off. All obstacles to the marriage having thus been removed, the

betrothal was promptly ratified in the presence of the Pope's legate, the Bishop of Amboise, who brought with him the necessary ecclesiastical dispensation for the union of first cousins, and of those in spiritual relationship, Charles being the godson of the Duchess. The marriage contract, which was confirmed by the King, put an end to all subjects in dispute by the mutual agreement of the contracting parties to leave all their respective rights to the survivor ; the bridegroom was sixteen, the bride fourteen years of age. Count Charles was at once invested with all the titles and estates of his late father-in-law. These estates consisted of the Bourbonnais, Auvergne, the Forez, the Marche, the Beaujolais, Combrailles, Mercœur, Annonay, Bourbon—Lancy, etc., exclusive of the Duchess's mother's appanage, and the pensions as peer and Hereditary Grand-Chamberlain.

The Duke could hold his own with the King. The youthful Charles de Bourbon united in his person the noble presence of his warlike race, the marked features of the Bourbons, and their commanding expression, with certain traces of his mother's beauty. His hair and beard were dark as the raven's wing ; his complexion ivory white ; his large Italian eyes full of fire. Thoroughly high-bred, his manner was somewhat cold ; but he had a great soul, an earnest mind, serious and reserved.

He exercised an extraordinary ascendancy over all who came in contact with him. It was told of him that on reaching his majority at fourteen, whilst still living with the Duchess, he renewed, without irritating her, the protest of his family against Suzanne's inheriting the paternal estate. Madame de Bourbon listened to his arguments, and said she would examine the question carefully, as she was equally unwilling to wrong either her daughter or her godson.

Charles was endowed with great faculties. To quickness of judgment, courage, and daring, he joined calm reflection, an iron will, steadfastness of purpose, and he recognised the responsibilities of power. Naturally ambitious, imperious, and of indomitable pride, his reason checked any excess of these qualities, and his complete self-command gave him unbounded influence over others. Though he had little of the overflowing expansiveness of the French race, none could surpass him in amiability when he chose to unbend ; whilst taking pleasure in maintaining a Court splendour in keeping with his high rank, he never indulged in dissipation. Guillaume Budé describes him as pre-eminent in war, and as in peace, in public as in private life. He ruled his camp and his household with equal firmness and gentleness, and shone in nothing more brightly than in his domestic relations. In the intervals of war he

invariably returned home to enjoy the pleasures of his own fireside ; and though his wife was delicate and deformed, he was a loyal and faithful husband, and he remained a deferential and respectful son to the Dowager Duchess, after as before his marriage. He consulted her on public affairs, listened to her advice, and in the Council Chamber was always at her side. Punctilious touching their rank, his mother-in-law and his wife always accompanied him to Court on solemn occasions and at the betrothal of Claude with Francis d'Angoulême, where they held a foremost place.

In 1508, three years after his marriage, he made a tour of inspection of his estates, accompanied by his mother-in-law. On his return he called a council to hear grievances and claims. He redressed the wrongs of his people, relieving them from over-taxation, shielding the weak from the oppression of the strong, restraining the violence of the men-at-arms and the tyranny of unjust judges. He was wont to say, ‘The misdeeds of men in office become those of the master who allows them.’ A just man in the highest sense of the word, he was beloved by his subjects, who frequently made him voluntary offerings of money to defray the cost of the King's service ; for Charles, when summoned to the field, undertook all the charges in princely style, and spent freely. His subjects sometimes contributed as much

as a hundred thousand livres to ease the Duke of his burdens.

In 1509 Count Charles followed Louis XII. across the Alps. Genoa had rebelled against the French yoke; the King was intent on reconquering the Duchy. Charles had two hundred men with him, and a stately retinue, living in princely style. He daily invited the most distinguished military leaders to his table, and conversed with them on military tactics, storing up their ideas and opinions with profit; in short, he inspired universal esteem.

In 1509, at nineteen years of age, Louis XII. placed him in command of two hundred grandes of France and Italy, each of whom had a retinue of fifteen or twenty persons, who gladly acknowledged the young Duke as chief—a distinction which he merited by conducting them safely from Genoa to Milan, fighting bravely at the battle of Agnadello.

In 1511 he returned to Italy with Dunois to wage war against Julius II., and the following year, with a body of four hundred men levied on his estates, he went to defy the English, who had taken possession of Bayonne. In 1512 we find him fighting side by side with Gaston de Foix at Ravenna.

His renown was so great that on the accession of Francis I. to the throne he was made Constable—the highest military grade. The young Queen

Claude rejoiced at this mark of favour to a Bourbon, for whose family she shared her mother's liking. At the King's coronation the Constable, with his mother-in-law and his wife, excited general admiration by the splendour of his state. At the King's supper he wore a robe of gold cloth, with a train twelve ells long, lined with ermine ; the gold cloth of which cost two hundred and eighty gold crowns the ell. His velvet cap sparkled with precious stones, and was worth a hundred thousand crowns.

Shortly after the coronation, he married his sister Renée to Antony, Lord of Lorraine and Bar, giving her a marriage portion of one hundred and twenty thousand livres Tournois.

Meanwhile the King was preparing a descent on Italy, but found all the known routes and passes guarded by the Swiss. The Constable, with wonderful perspicacity and calculation, led the army through defiles, transported seventy-two heavy guns along mule-tracks, and entered Italy by three different ways, to the astonishment and terror of the enemy. At Marignan, where Francis exposed himself rashly, he commanded the vanguard, and protected the King's person ; in a word, the Constable had a considerable share in the victory.

Twenty days later, and he carried by assault the citadel of Milan, which still held out ; and, after the departure of Francis, he remained in Lombardy to

pacify and organize that province, in which enterprise he succeeded. Unfortunately, on returning to France, he left Lautrec in power.

To crown Bourbon's good fortune, an heir to his name was born after nine years' marriage. In July, 1517, when he was present at the King's state entry into Rouen, he received a message from his mother-in-law to the effect that his wife expected her delivery. He hurried away from Rouen, met another messenger on his way, urging him to make all possible speed, and arrived home just in time to receive his son—the future hope and glory of his house.

Great rejoicings celebrated the event in the castle and country. Bonfires and joyous acclamations were seen and heard everywhere. A courier was despatched to acquaint the King with the good news, and request him to stand godfather to the child. Francis consented, and arrived at the castle, where a royal reception awaited him.

An escort of gentlemen in Albanian, Spanish, and other costumes met him at some distance from the Bourbon residence, where fêtes and feastings were uninterrupted. Masquerades, dances, tilts and tournaments succeeded each other. At the banqueting-table the King was served by five hundred gentlemen in velvet costumes, which, in those days, were not common, each wearing a gold chain passed three times round his neck—the sign of nobility and wealth.

The Constable's triumph may be imagined ; but how often, when Fortune smiles her brightest, a reverse treads close on her heels !

The pomp and luxury displayed by Bourbon in honour of Francis excited, it is said, his rancour and jealousy ; but such a feeling could not take root in so generous and mobile, not to say frivolous, a character. A more serious motive provoked the rupture which followed not long after the christening of the Bourbon babe.

Louise of Savoy, fourteen years Bourbon's senior, was, nevertheless, passionately in love with him. It is useless to add that her passion was unrequited. Bourbon treated the enamoured lady's advances with cold haughtiness, and, when joked on the subject, expressed his contempt for Louise in no measured language, which, repeated to her, provoked her rage, and stirred her to revenge.

She began, by treacherous insinuations touching Bourbon, to shake her son's confidence in him, and soon sowed the seeds of antagonism in his breast. Despite the Constable's brilliant and devoted services, he was manifestly out of favour at Court. He was no longer chosen to execute any special mission, no compensation was made to him for his great outlay during the war ; even his pensions were suppressed. Madame de Bourbon went to Amboise to defend her son-in-law's rights. She was badly re-

ceived. Louise had for Madame de Bourbon the instinctive hatred of a vicious for a virtuous woman. The respectful homage shown to the Duchess by the Court exasperated Louise, who vented her irritation in bitter words. Francis, who, after all, was naturally well disposed, tried to smooth matters by calling the Constable to Paris, begging him to forget the past, and promising that amends should be made him. They conversed, laughed, joked, and feasted together, and separated the best of friends. Francis acted in good faith. His mother was aware of this, but knew how to regain her baneful influence over him. The pensions in arrears were not paid, and a bitter insult was inflicted on Bourbon. In 1521, as the army in Picardy prepared to attack the Imperial forces, the command of the vanguard, the Constable's due, was taken from him and given to the Duke d'Alençon, the King's brother-in-law. Bourbon received the blow in silence, but was none the less pained and angry. He nevertheless fulfilled his duties in the army with his former zeal. He took Bouchain, Hesdin, and the surrounding places, and restored them to the King's authority.

About this time a series of family misfortunes fell upon the Constable. Within a year his wife, three sons born in quick succession, and his mother-in-law were snatched from him. Then opened the great tragedy. As has been said, the marriage contract

assured the inheritance of the Bourbon domains to the survivor. Now, as the survivor was the husband by feudal law, he was the legal heir. Moreover, Madame de Bourbon, foreseeing the intrigues which menaced her beloved son-in-law, had made a will entirely in his favour, so that Bourbon's rights seemed indisputable. But few rights are free from legal question, and when the Crown is suitor, judges are not always impartial. Scarcely was his mother-in-law buried, when the Constable was arraigned before the Parliament of Paris, attacked on the one hand by Louise of Savoy, who claimed her cousin Suzanne's inheritance, declaring as null and void, and contrary to custom, the settlement made by the contracting parties in favour of one another.

On the other hand, the Attorney-General asserted that the Duchies of Auvergne and Bourbonnais, with the County of Clermont, would revert to the Crown by inalienable right.

The pretensions of Louise of Savoy were advocated by servants worthy of her. First, by the Chancellor Duprat—her creature, to whom she promised a good share of the coveted estates—by the advocate Poyet, afterwards made a Chancellor by her; and by the Advocate-General Lizet, who became President later.

Louise's avariciousness surpassed even her desire of vengeance. The greater the obstacles, the more

intense was her thirst for gain ; and she nurtured the hope that the Constable would be driven by this violent attack to compromise the matter by asking her to marry him ; for the pleadings recited that inasmuch as the marriage of Charles de Bourbon with his cousin Suzanne had been arranged for the sake of putting an end to family quarrels, a marriage between the Constable with Louise would conduce to the reconciliation of all conflicting interests. The Chancellor added that the difference of age between Bourbon and Louise was no hindrance, considering she was so high-born a lady, so beautiful and so rich !

How Bourbon received the proposal may be imagined. His sorrow was too recent and his indignation too keen to allow him to give ear to such a suggestion. He repelled the offer in the crudest terms.

Louise's indignation knew no bounds. Parliament hesitated how to decide in a matter beyond its competence. Louise importuned Parliament until she obtained, first, a sequestration of the Constable's estates, and, secondly, the confiscation in favour of the King of the county of La Marche, which had been taken from the Duke of Nemours by Louis XI., and given as an appanage to his daughter. Francis I. gave up this county to his mother immediately. The intention to ruin Bourbon was

evident. He found himself deprived of his inheritance, despoiled of his titles and wealth, degraded from the highest to the lowest rank. Such was the fate reserved for him by his unworthy adversary.

His affections and his fortune wrecked, left alone to brunt the tempest of base injustice and intrigue, which he was powerless to avert, what change came over this naturally noble character? Evidently, had Madame de Beaujeu been near him, she would never have allowed him to turn his sword against the country he had helped to aggrandize. The mere sight of his wife and children would assuredly have prevented him from embarking on a criminal adventure; but his guardian angels were gone; he stood alone, his once happy home was desolate. Despair seized him; his heart was hardened against his country. At that time, too, patriotism was not strongly developed, for we find that nobles did not scruple to pass from the service of one country or prince to that of another. Armies were a collection of foreigners, many of whom enlisted from mercenary motives only; between suzerain and vassal there was a personal contract—if a vassal's felony freed the suzerain, that of the suzerain likewise freed the vassal. Now the spoliation of Bourbon was absolutely felonious. It called for revenge as the duty of the victim, and the Constable cited the answer of a Gascon knight to

Charles VII., who asked if anything would tempt him to break faith with him.

‘Not the offer of your kingdom, sire; but the semblance of an affront!’

Bourbon had received a cruel affront, which struck him to his heart’s core. The gauntlet was cast at his feet: he could not but take it up. Undoubtedly he might have chosen his revenge in a higher sphere, embraced the cause of Christianity, and protected it against Turkish barbarism. Such an heroic act would have elicited the applause of the nation, and would, undoubtedly, have reinstated him in his lawful inheritance. Alas for him and for France! his sense of honour was overpowered by a proud and vengeful spirit.

Henry VIII. and Charles V. were both ready to secure the services of the ex-Constable. He decided in favour of Charles, as the more powerful of the two. Through the intervention of Adrien de Croy, whose mother was made prisoner at Hesdin, and treated with great respect by the Constable, he opened negotiations with Charles V. The Emperor, recognising the value of such a recruit, and convinced as to the issue, lavished promises on his new ally, offered him a superior post in the imperial army, and declared he should marry his sister Eleonore, widow of the King of Portugal. If Francis should be beaten, the Constable’s estates should be restored

to him. But Bourbon exacted more : that if the campaign proved successful, an independent kingdom should be given to him, composed of his former provinces of Bourbonnais and Auvergne, to which the Dauphiné and Provence were to be added.

These secret negotiations were carried on in the spring of 1523, while Francis I. (having sent a sufficient force to protect his northern frontier) was preparing to make Italy the seat of war. With this object the King ordered a rendezvous of the army at Lyons, in the beginning of September, and having arranged to pass through Moulins on his way to join the forces, called upon the Constable to meet him there and to proceed with him to Lyons.

Already vague rumours of an understanding between the Emperor and Bourbon had reached Francis, who gave no credence to them ; but on his way M. de Brézé, Seneschal of Normandy, attached to the Court of Louise of Savoy, sent such precise details of the affair by two Norman gentlemen in the Constable's service, that doubt was no longer possible.

Francis thereupon changed his plan, halting at St. Pierre le Moustier, a short distance from Moulins, where he expected to meet the Duke of Suffolk at the head of a body of German lansquenets from Picardy, and two days after he entered Moulins with this force. Bourbon was there, but feigned illness, in order to escape accompanying the King, as he meant to excite

rebellion in the province so soon as Francis left. Nothing would have been easier at this moment than for Francis to arrest Bourbon; but his generous nature took the upper hand, and he visited him in his room, told him of the reports that had reached him, attributing them to Bourbon's dread of losing his estates, and insisted that this alone had affected his allegiance to his prince and suzerain. Francis exhorted him to discard such unworthy doubts, and promised him that even if he lost his suit his domains should, nevertheless, be restored to him. He might confidently rely on this promise as sacred, and with this assurance he must, in all haste, prepare to accompany his King to Italy.

Bourbon knew by experience that Francis's evil genius—his mother—was now as ever on the alert to counteract her son's better impulse, in which he put no faith. He denied all the pretended negotiations with the Emperor, who, it is true, had made him offers that he had declined. He had only waited for a private interview with the King to inform him of all that had passed; his doctors assured him that in a few days he could be moved to Lyons in a litter, and he promised to join his Majesty there. Francis was strongly advised, after this equivocal answer, to arrest Bourbon. He refused to do so, persuaded of the Constable's good faith, and believing the reconciliation to be genuine. Under this impression, he

left Moulins for Lyons, ordering Perrot de la Bretonnière, one of his gentlemen, to remain with the Constable, who started after a day or two to follow the King. At La Palisse Charles pretended to have a sudden return of his illness, and despatched Perrot to acquaint the King that he was on his way to Lyons, hoping to be with him shortly.

Hardly had Perrot set out on this mission, when Bourbon mounted his horse and rode in all speed to his strongly-fortified place, Castle of Chantelles, whence he sent the Bishop of Autun with a letter to the King, from whom he demanded a formal promise of the restitution of his estates, on receipt of which he would be willing to place his sword at his Majesty's service, and be faithful to him till death.

At this moment all could have been happily arranged. A generous or just act on the King's part might have averted grievous misfortunes to France, and a crime on the part of Bourbon.

When, however, Francis heard of Bourbon's flight to Chantelles, he was convinced of his treasonable intentions, and immediately sent off the Bastard of Savoy, Grand Master of France, and the Marshal de Chabannes, each with a hundred men, and the Captain of the Guards with two hundred, to arrest the Constable at Chantelles. The Grand Master, going direct to Moulins, first met the Bishop of Autun's mules, and then the Bishop in person, the

bearer of the above-named letter from Bourbon to Francis. Instead, however, of allowing his Grace to continue his route, he arrested him, and the King simultaneously ordered the arrest of Saint Vallier, Emard de Prie, la Vanguyon, and other nobles of the Duke's retinue.

M. de Bourbon, on learning these acts of violence, utterly despaired of any reconciliation with Francis. Some of his friends advised him to hold out at Chantelles, situated in the heart of France, cut off from all resources, and incapable of sustaining a siege. The Constable, however, determined to seek safety in flight with Pomperan, who was compromised for having killed one of the King's favourites—M. de Chesnay—at Amboise. The two started without page or valet, Bourbon disguised as Pomperan's servant. They halted the first night at M. de Lalière's—a devoted ally of the Bourbons. The second halt was at Pomperan's castle. Thence they sped to Puy, in Auvergne, whence they continued their flight to Saint Bonnet, alighting at an inn in charge of an old woman. Believing themselves safe from recognition, they proposed to rest there a day, but late in the evening, the royal post-master, de Tournon, arrived suddenly from Lyons. The two fugitives, esteeming prudence the better part of valour, decamped, and passed the night at a village two leagues distant.

Here they were in imminent danger of another adventure. The hostess recognised Pomperan, but happily she was ready to aid the fugitives. She provided Pomperan with a fresh horse—his own having gone lame—and offered her son as guide. They quitted their friendly hostess at midnight, and at dawn reached Dause, opposite Vienne on the other side of the Rhone, which was supposed to be guarded by French troops, M. de Bourbon hiding behind a house, while Pomperan went in quest of news. He met a butcher near the bridge of Vienne, and giving him to understand that he was one of the King's archers, inquired whether his brother soldiers had arrived to guard the passage against M. de Bourbon. The butcher answered in the negative, but said he had heard that a large cavalry force was on the Dauphiné side of the river.

Thus reassured, Bourbon and his companion crossed the river, not by the bridge, but by a ferry, in order not to create suspicion. Ten or twelve infantry soldiers embarked at the same time on the ferry-boat, and recognised Pomperan in mid-stream. Anxious, but ready for any emergency, the fugitives determined, if necessary, to cut the rope, and turn the boat to the Vivarais shore, and thence gain the mountains. This precaution was not needed. They crossed peaceably, mounted their horses, and so long as the soldiers were in sight, kept the high-

road to Grenoble. Once free from this risk, they struck across a wood towards St. Antoine de Viennois, and sought asylum in the hostelry of an old widow-woman.

Whilst at supper, Pomperan was again recognised. The hostess, addressing him, asked if he were not among those who favoured M. de Bourbon's mad policy.

'No,' replied Pomperan; 'but to be in his company I would gladly sacrifice all I possess.'

The meal was not over, when they were told that the King's provost was approaching in pursuit of the fugitives. To escape suspicion, they finished their supper calmly, then remounted their steeds, and galloped off to a sequestered place in the mountains six leagues from St. Antoine, where they found rest and shelter for twenty-four hours.

On Tuesday, the day but one after this stage in their flight, they proceeded to Pont de Beauvoisin, and on Wednesday evening were at Chambéry—not without an occasional alarm, and encountering groups of cavalry going to join the royal army.

They proposed posting from Susa to Savona, or to Genoa, and embarking thence for Spain; but the news that the Count de St. Pol had taken this route to rejoin the Admiral in Italy obliged them to give up the plan, and to turn their steps northward. So, recrossing the Rhone, they pushed on to St. Claude,

the Bishop of which place was an Imperialist. He furnished them with an escort of cavalry, which facilitated their journey to Poligny, and thence to Besançon and Ferette, where a number of discontented nobles joined the Constable.

At this stage Captain Imbault de Rivoire, one of the King's household who was at Ferette, used every effort to persuade M. de Bourbon to return to France, taking on himself to assure him of the King's pardon, and that all his estates would be restored to him. But it was too late.

M. de Bourbon left Ferette with a body of eighty horsemen, crossed through Germany to Trent and Mantua (the Duke of Mantua was first cousin to the Constable's mother); thence he went to Cremona and Piacenza, where was Charles de Lanoy, Viceroy of Naples, recently appointed Lieutenant-General of the Emperor in the stead of Colonna, who had fallen ill. Bourbon continued his route, arrived at length at Genoa, persisting in his intention of sailing thence for Spain. The weather, however, was contrary for some weeks. In the meantime, MM. de Reeve and de Lucy arrived with the Emperor's commands for Bourbon either to join him or take arms for him in Italy. The Constable accepted the latter alternative, and set out for Naples, where the Viceroy at once nominated him to a command in the Imperial army.

CHAPTER V.

FRANCIS THE FIRST'S CAPTIVITY.

BOURBON'S disaffection was followed by a general revolt among the nobility. Some declared themselves openly for the Constable, others secretly took measures to uphold him on his return to France ; some remained undecided which side to take.

The whole nation was in a disturbed state. The people found a pretext for disorder in the treason of the Duke of Bourbon. The royal authority was shaken ; anarchy reigned throughout the country ; brigandage and pillage were rife. Organized bands of lawless criminals, more savage than wild beasts, overran the provinces, sacking towns, burning villages, outraging women and girls, and treating the men with abominable cruelty, putting out their eyes and hacking their limbs.

One of these bands adopted the name of 'The Thousand Devils.' If asked whence they came,

they answered, ‘ From the devil ;’ or whither bound, ‘ To the devil.’

Want and misery engendered the plague in Paris. The citizens revolted ; a gibbet was set up opposite the King’s palace ; the people tore it down in the night. Such was the state of France within. Without, a league was formed for her dismemberment. Charles V. adroitly drew to his side the Pope, the Archduke of Austria, and the Italian Republics, in a scheme to dismember France. Picardy was invaded by the English; the Spaniards crossed the Pyrenees; twelve thousand German lansquenets marched into Burgundy to support the Constable, and raised the standard of rebellion in his former provinces.

Francis exerted all his energies to cope with such terrible difficulties. He abandoned his march into Italy, established himself at Lyons, and took prompt and vigorous measures to guard the frontiers. Decrees were issued for the organization of a special troop of gendarmes to restore order in the provinces. The peasants were encouraged to join the gendarmes, and to deliver up the brigands to justice. Pillage was thus checked, and the guilty were punished. Ordinances were framed to repair the disorderly state of the finances ; the collection of taxes was controlled ; and the provincial revenues were, by the King’s order, sent to Blois. At the same time the reckless extravagance of the Court was limited ; and

all unnecessary expenses were cut down. Proceedings were taken against the Constable's adherents, Francis following the details with strict attention, and giving the most stringent orders concerning their trial. Later, perhaps, he might be more lenient, and be able to pardon. At the outset he was implacable, and his firm attitude was successful. The nobility rallied round their sovereign in defence of the frontiers, and the war prospects became brighter.

The German troops, harassed by La Trémouille in Burgundy, took fright and recrossed the frontier. The Spaniards, who had seized Fontarabia, were defeated at Bayonne. The English, who had advanced within eleven leagues of Paris, hearing that the King was about to send his whole force of gendarmes to attack them, and fearing a surprise, withdrew.

France was once more free. The good star of Francis shone less brightly in Italy. Under the conflicting influences of his mother and Madame de Châteaubriand, he replaced Lautrec by the handsome Bonnivet, who, it was said, consoled Louise for Bourbon's disdain. Bonnivet, self-sufficient and devoid of any military talent, was defeated on all sides. Retreating at Bourbon's approach, he was driven into the heart of the Alps. Bayard, who commanded the rear-guard of the army, was struck by a bullet, and fell exclaiming : ‘Jesus! My God! I am a dead man!’ His companions laid him at

the foot of a tree, whilst he recited his prayers before his sword-hilt, which was in the form of a cross. Bourbon, in the meanwhile, came up, and expressed his pity to see him in this extremity. Bayard replied :

‘ Sir, I need no pity. I die a man of honour. It is you I pity, to see that you take arms against your Prince, your country, and your oath.’

This was on 30th April, 1524. A safe conduct was given to his house-steward to take his remains to his family vault in Dauphiné, where his honoured ashes repose.

The retreat of the French continued without obstacle after Bayard’s death. Bourbon pursued them over the Alps into Provence at the head of fifteen thousand men. All unfortified towns were taken by him. Bending his course southward, he attacked Marseilles, where he met with an heroic resistance. The women worked in the trenches. The enemy was forced to halt. About the same time the imperial fleet was beaten by Doria, then in the service of France, and the Prince of Orange was taken prisoner. Montmorency and Chabannes thereupon advanced to attack Bourbon, who, having lost half his troops, retreated hastily to Nice. The news of this success by land and sea reached Francis at Blois, where he was detained by his wife Claude’s fatal illness. His hopes reviving, he longed

to take an active part in the fight. He quitted the dying Queen, hurried to join the camp, and, contrary to the advice of his general, resolved to make another descent on the Duchy of Milan.

Circumstances favoured this design. England, mistrustful, remained passive ; the Italian States were neutral ; the Venetians supported France ; the Pope offered himself as mediator.

The imperial army was commanded by three generals : Pescaro, a Spaniard by birth, but Italian by his marriage with Vittoria Colonna, who, later on, was made illustrious in her widowhood by the passion with which she inspired Michael Angelo ; Lanoy, who came of an old Flemish family ; and Bourbon. Pescaro and Lanoy had great difficulty in keeping their men from deserting during Bourbon's recruiting expedition in Germany, where volunteers flocked round the standard of the renowned soldier.

Francis crossed the Alps unmolested, and arrived before Pavia with an army well supplied with ammunition and provisions, elated with the recent successes, and full of ardour and confidence in future good fortune. It would have been an easy matter to have attacked the imperialists. During Bourbon's absence they were incapable of making a strong resistance ; but Francis elected to besiege Pavia, where his army became exhausted by the weariness of inaction. The King at length, losing patience,

sent off ten thousand men, under the Duke of Albany, to conquer Naples.

Besides this, six thousand Swiss were recalled to the Grisons in dread of offending the Emperor, and four thousand Italians perished in an ambuscade. In the interval Bourbon returned with his lansquenets, and the imperial officers, always short of funds, made ready at once for an attack. The most able French generals were of opinion that, having waited so long, it was better to wait patiently a little longer, inasmuch as they occupied a strong strategical position. This wise counsel was outweighed by the ardour of their juniors. In the discussion which ensued Bonnivet exclaimed, ‘A King of France cannot beat a retreat before the enemy!’ The vanity of Francis was flattered by this apostrophe, and he decided to advance.

The two armies were of about equal strength, fifteen or twenty thousand men on either side. The position held by the French, and their artillery, were superior to those of the enemy; the latter were in an open plain, without shelter on any side, whereas the French were protected on their rear by the entrenchments they had thrown up round Pavia, on their right flank by the Ticino, on their left by the park walls of Mirabello, and on their front by trenches and ramparts covered with formidable guns. The artillery was commanded by the brave and capable Galiot de Genouillac.

The imperialists, hesitating to open an attack in such a disadvantageous position, attempted to seize the park of Mirabello. On the night of the 25th of February a company of Spanish arquebusiers, together with a small contingent of light horse, succeeded in gaining the outskirts, and in making a breach in the wall of the park. At daybreak, however, when the advance-guard attempted to join them, the French artillery opened a murderous fire. Pescaro and Bourbon ordered their men to disperse, and to shelter themselves from the hail of shot. The King, at the head of his body-guard, did not understand the movements of the enemy.

‘They are flying!’ he exclaimed. ‘Let us charge them!’

And all his companions cried in chorus, ‘To the charge! To the charge!’

Instead of allowing the artillery to continue its destructive fire, a troop of young men, wild with zeal, rushed within range of the cannons. Galiot, in despair, was compelled to silence his guns; the entire body of the household cavalry, quitting the safe position it held, galloped after the King in pursuit of an enemy in imaginary flight.

The imperialists, at a loss to explain this strange movement, brought forward their Spanish cavalry, supported by arquebusiers, who opposed a firm front to the French. At the first volley a number of

the latter were unhorsed, and a fearful hand-to-hand struggle ensued.

The temerity with which the cavalry had entered the plain naturally separated it from the main body of the forces. Jean d'Avalos took prompt possession of the intervening space. The Swiss, commanded by Jean von Diesbach, seeing their captain fall, fled, whilst the rear-guard, under the Duke d'Alençon, followed their example without striking a blow. This sorry captain hurried off to Lyons, where his wife loaded him with such bitter reproaches for his cowardice that he died of shame a month afterwards.

The French cavalry, suddenly aware of their rash folly, determined to sell their lives dearly, and in truth accomplished prodigies of valour. Bonnivet rushed into the thickest of the fray, his visor raised. He, de Lorraine, la Trémouille, Marshal de Foix, Chabannes, the Bastard of Savoy, the flower of the nobility, were killed; and when eight hundred Spanish arquebusiers threw themselves against the diminished band the defeat was complete. The whole burden of the fight then fell upon the King, who made an heroic resistance. His horse was killed under him. Wounded and thrown to the ground, he rose and continued to fight. Surrounded on all sides, alone in the midst of the slain—both of friends and foes—he dealt death-blows on the imperialists, bent on capturing him dead or alive.

At this moment Pomperan came up, and, dismounting, placed himself beside Francis, and, sword in hand, kept the soldiers, eager to earn the promised ransom, at bay. He covered the King's person until the arrival of Lanoy, Viceroy of Naples, to whom Francis surrendered. He was conducted to Lanoy's tent. The Spanish officers rushed in to see the royal captive, who had to be disarmed. Diego d'Avila took his gauntlets, others stripped him of his coat-of-mail, his belt, his spurs, dividing the spoil, each determined to possess a relic, for greed or glory; the vanquished King kept silence, only begging the Marquis de Guast to promise he should not be led to Pavia, to save him the humiliation of becoming the laughing-stock of the population he had so long harassed and alarmed. His three wounds—one across the forehead, another on the arm, and the third on his right hand—were carefully dressed. He had also severe contusions on the chest, of which, however, a relic of the true Cross, which he wore round his neck, encased in a golden cross, had lessened the force. Francis, before supping with the imperialist chiefs, entered a church to bow the knee in prayer. His eyes were attracted by a text on the wall, ‘It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes.’ He bowed his head at the appropriate lesson.

Although the battle of Pavia lasted little more than an hour, eight or nine thousand French nobles were left on the field.

When Bourbon learnt the King was a captive, he threw his sword in the air with joy—his pride and vengeance were fully satisfied; then, recovering his dignity, he went to do homage to his captive sovereign. Bending one knee to the ground, he kissed his hand; at table he handed him the napkin. French historians affirm that Francis pushed it away with violence; the Spaniards, on the contrary, relate that he received it without any demonstration of hatred or anger. We are inclined to give credence to the nobler version.

On the evening of the battle, as the King was undressing alone, a French prisoner slipped unperceived into Francis's tent, and volunteered his services with marks of profound respect.

‘Who are you, sir?’ inquired the King.

‘Sire,’ replied the intruder, ‘I am your subject, by name Montpezat, a gentleman of M. de Foix’s company, and now a prisoner of the Spanish soldier who keeps guard over your Majesty.’

Thereupon Francis called the Spaniard, and asked him what ransom he demanded for his prisoner. The soldier told him. ‘Set him at liberty,’ said Francis, ‘and I will pay the ransom and a hundred crowns more. You shall soon receive this sum.’

The day after the battle Francis was taken to the fortress of Pizzighitone, there to await Charles V.'s pleasure. Thence he wrote to his mother the letter in which occurs the phrase so often misquoted : ' In order that you may be acquainted, madame, with the rest of my misfortunes : know that of all nothing remains to me but my honour and my life. That this may comfort you in the midst of our adversities, I have begged for the permission, which has been graciously accorded, to write this present to you.'

Bourbon and Pomperan visited him some days later. The King accosted them as follows :

' Well, my lords, are you proud of having vanquished, oppressed, and dispersed your fellow-countrymen ? '

' Sire,' replied Bourbon, ' I should willingly have abstained from so doing had I not been driven to it.'

Then the King drew him to the window, and the two conversed in a low tone together for more than half an hour.

Thus no humiliation was spared the unhappy Francis. Thanks, however, to his gay, light heart, and his shallow nature, neither pain nor mortification took deep root. He could neither love nor hate persistently. His chivalrous spirit found a certain charm in the society of his companions in arms, even though one was a rebellious prince and the other a rebellious subject. He not only refrained

from reproaching either, but consented that Pomperan should be attached to his person during his imprisonment in Italy, and when Francis regained his liberty and his throne, his gaoler was restored to favour and to his estates.

After the battle of Pavia, the imminent dismemberment of France was averted by the dissensions and jealousies of her enemies. Louise, too, as Regent, gave proof of a cool head and resolution, which contributed greatly to redeem the kingdom from such an eventuality. True, her political views were not lofty ; but in business she was far more practical than her son. Above all, her talent lay in fomenting disputes between her enemies, and in profiting by them. Her conscience never troubled her.

She established herself at Lyons, to be more accessible to her son, and maintained her power as Regent, notwithstanding the endeavours of the discontented party, who encouraged the Duke de Vendôme to supplant her in that office. Her first step was to conciliate the Parliament of Paris, hitherto antagonistic to her. She submitted to it the measures proposed for the preservation of the kingdom, and as a further proof of condescension, ordered two unfortunate Huguenots to be burnt alive. She wrote to the provincial Parliaments to conjure them to pacify and reassure the populations. The remnants of the army were collected under the command of Vendôme,

Guise and Lautrec in order to protect the frontiers. She renewed the alliance with the Venetians by skilful negotiations, and used every effort to alienate Henry VIII. from Charles V. by exciting his jealousy against the Emperor. Now Henry's ambition was to be King of France, and he foresaw that by continuing the war Charles V. had a much greater chance than he of the French throne. The English were about to march into Picardy; Henry ordered them to halt, and soon after entered into a defensive alliance with France.

Germany, moreover, was beginning to feel the first impulse of the Reformation. Charles V.'s position was shaken by this spiritual revolution. At the same time his Italian States, dreading the imperial yoke, offered the Neapolitan crown to Pescaro; and Clement VII. addressed a letter of condolence to the Duchesse d'Angoulême as a premonitory step to his change of politics. Pescaro, Bourbon, and Lanoy increased Charles V.'s difficulties by quarrelling. The two first were jealous of Lanoy, who was generalissimo of the Imperial forces, and enjoyed the Emperor's full confidence. The army, too, had been further weakened by the campaign, and there was a lack of funds to renew it; and even the capture of the King of France, though in itself a fortune, was none the less a source of embarrassment.

Francis I., a prisoner in the fortress of Pizzighitone, judging the Emperor's character by his own, expected every day to see Charles V. arrive, throw his arms round his neck, and treat him fraternally. He even wrote him the following touching letter :

'I beg of you to show pity, and to use such fair means to ensure my safe custody as are fitting towards a King of France, whom it is advisable to conciliate, not to drive to despair. You have something to gain, since, instead of a prisoner, you can make a King your slave for evermore.'

Charles answered this appeal evasively. An adept in the art of dissimulation, he affected humility in his triumph, though taking the utmost advantage of it. He forbade all rejoicings at the fate of Pavia, attributing the glory to God alone; and wrote a tender letter afterwards to the Regent, whom he styled *mother*, promising her that he would be neither harsh nor severe, and exhorting her to be less haughty and less daring.

His moderate conditions were simply the dismemberment of France: Burgundy was to be given up to him. Francis rejected such terms unhesitatingly, preferring captivity to dishonourable freedom. Charles, however, was intent on overcoming the King's resistance. To effect his purpose, he decided on sending him to Spain to isolate him; but the

undertaking was not easy. Bourbon and Pescaro considered Francis a hostage, guaranteeing their fortunes; the troops looked on him as a security for their pay. The Mediterranean, too, was guarded by the French fleet. Lanoy, the Emperor's trusty friend, skilfully compassed the difficulty. He assured the credulous Francis that in Madrid he would be fraternally treated—Queen Eleanor admired and loved him enthusiastically—and that she would assuredly exert her powerful influence over her brother and obtain his freedom.

Francis gave ready credence to this fable, consented to leave Italy secretly, and embarked on a vessel of the French fleet, placed at the Emperor's service. Montmorency, at large on parole, undertook the execution of this project. He brought ten French galleys from Toulon to Genoa. During this manœuvre Lanoy deluded Pescaro and Bourbon into believing that the royal prisoner was to be transported to Naples. Francis arrived at Genoa, and, in company with Montmorency, sailed for Spain, where he landed at Barcelona on the 22nd of June; thence he went to Valentia, and afterwards to Jean de Lotera. He was received everywhere with enthusiasm; the nobility flocked round him; the people acclaimed him, crowds of miserable beings thronging his way to be miraculously cured by the touch of the royal hand.

M. d'Asparres thus wrote to the Regent : ‘The grandes esteem it a pleasure to accompany the King ; among others, the Duke de l'Infantado, one of the first nobles of the country.’ The Duke’s daughter became so enamoured of Francis, that, from sheer despair, she took the veil, and founded a monastery, La Pieta, at Guadalaxara. The French ambassador wrote to the Parliament of Paris : ‘I can certify that his Majesty’s good grace and amiability win the love of all who approach him. Everyone desires his freedom and peace.’

Charles V., in the meanwhile, continued his protestations of friendship to the captive by letter, until he could renew them in person.

The King sent Montmorency to meet the Emperor at Toledo. A safe conduct was given to Madame Marguerite for her to be present at the treaty of peace, to facilitate the negotiations, of which a truce of three months was agreed upon—a truce in which Charles had all the advantage, as the French fleet remained at his orders in the interval. Queen Eleanor wrote an autograph letter to the Regent, assuring her of her great desire to see the King set at liberty. Louise, charmed at receiving such good tidings, hastened to send her daughter by sea, despatching, at the same time, the Bishop of Embrun, M. de Tournon, and the President de Selves by land, to prepare the way for, and support the

Princess during the negotiations. Charles V. deputed the captains of his guard to receive the newly appointed ambassadors at Saragossa, and to accompany them to Toledo.

Some days later, M. de Selves wrote to the Regent from Toledo :

‘MADAM,

‘I, the President, arrived in this town on Saturday last. The Emperor was graciously pleased to send a bishop and a count to meet me, and to conduct me to my residence. The Emperor furthermore sent word he would receive us either in public or private audience, as we might prefer. We left the option to his Majesty.

‘On Monday the Emperor sent for us before he went to mass. The aforesaid bishop and count, with a numerous suite of gentlemen of the household, escorted us to the palace. Its galleries and halls were lined with the Imperial Guards.

‘As soon as we were ushered into the Emperor’s presence, after he had received and read your letters, he inquired how and where you were; to which we replied that, thanks to Heaven, you were well, and, we believed, you had left Lyons to be nearer to the Spanish frontier. The Emperor then dismissed all but the principal personages.’

The audience, which was purely ceremonial, passed

in the interchange of polite phrases. Charles V. then sent the ambassadors to pay their respects to his sister, Queen Eleanor (future Queen of France), who received them with great cordiality, recalling the ties of relationship and of old alliances. Don Hugues de Moncade, Lanoy's successor as Viceroy of Naples, was commissioned to meet the King, and accompany him to Madrid, where he was received with royal honours. Francis, ever prone to illusions, immediately imagined that his kingdom would be integrally restored to him. To exact from a captive sovereign his consent to a dismemberment of his States would be contrary to all the laws of chivalry. It was impossible that Charles V. should for a moment entertain such an idea. He would be satisfied with the abandonment of the Duchy of Milan, the restitution of Bourbon's estates and rank, and with Burgundy given as a marriage portion to his sister Eleanor. The Emperor would marry Francis' sister, the Duchess d'Alençon, thus they would be twice brothers-in-law, and Bourbon should wed Renée de France—so from war and discord joy and family happiness would assuredly result.

While Francis was building these castles in the air, Charles V. pursued his course with an iron will. He maintained his exactions in their entirety. He was determined to take Burgundy at any cost ; if his captive resisted, it should be wrenched from

him. Such was the tenor of the Toledo conferences. Francis was doomed to experience a bitter deception ; his detention at Madrid was even more severe and solitary than it was in Italy. He was moved from prison to prison, and each time the change was for the worse. At length he was incarcerated in a high tower annexed to the ancient Alcazar. There was but one door to his narrow chamber, but one window through which daylight could penetrate, a window with two iron gratings solidly fixed into the massive walls, around which the Manzanares flowed. The King's room was scantily furnished with a bed, a few chairs and tables only. Two battalions guarded the entrance to the tower ; within were grim gaolers. The Emperor ceased visiting or writing to the King, and the latter's friends were forbidden access to him.

Poor Francis ! He of mercurial temperament—he whose youthful wildness and activity had hitherto been unchecked, to be pent up within four narrow walls, whence he could only descry the gravelly bed of the often waterless Manzanares beneath his window, and the arid landscape beyond.

Poor Francis ! at thirty years of age condemned to the silence and solitude of a prison life—he who joyfully unsheathed his sword, eager for the conquest, whether of territory or of a woman's heart. His imagination hitherto had buoyed him up. He was

of a poetical nature ; often his tender sentiments had found expression in madrigals and songs addressed to his mother, his sister, or to some Court lady. From each halting-place in his military marches he rhymed regrets at his absence, and his desire to return to those he loved. For instance :

‘Or sachez doncq, ô Madame et ma mère,
Que de vous m'est l'absence trop amère.
Que diray plus, sinon que cognois bien
Qu'en la beauté des lieux ne gist le bien,
Mais seulement en compagnie bonne
De celle là où tout plaisir se donne.

* * * * *

Que diray plus : l'amour et le debvoir
Accompaignez d'envie du revoir
M'ont faict ouvrir par diligence entière
Tant que l'ordre est par toute la frontière.’

He recalls this graceful picture to the nymphs of Amboise :

‘Du sien beau Loire arrouasant la contrée
Qui tient du Mont Gebenne en la mer Armorique.’

Then he conjured his lady-love to remember that there is but one perfect lover in the whole world, who, out of obedience to duty and honour, compelled to leave her, is thus deprived of all happiness. He went on to discuss whether she or he suffered the most from this absence, and whether it were better to conceal or to describe his pain.

He versified his disastrous campaign, and his confinement at Pizzighitone. In his prison tower at Madrid he poured forth his lamentations and grief in doleful stanzas, impatiently awaiting the hour when he could sing his liberation.

The political errors of Francis I. too often cast a shadow on the heroic and amiable side of his nature. Even when despair and illness drove him to wish for death, there is no tinge of bitterness in his thoughts, and the sentiment of his duty as King remained unimpaired. Not for a moment did he forget that he represented France.

Cœur resolu d'autre chose n'a cure
Que de l'honneur.

Le corps vaincu, le cœur reste vainqueur,
Le travail est l'estuve de son heur.

Charles V., in his hour of triumph, was powerless to wrest from him a renunciation of Burgundy. Francis would rather die than consent to lose that province, and, in truth, he fell so ill pending the debate that the Emperor, fearing his victim might escape him, changed his tactics, and once more wrote to and visited his prisoner. All to no purpose : Francis grew daily worse ; his condition grew alarming even to his enemies ; only the presence of his sister Marguerite had power to revive him.

CHAPTER VI.

MARGUERITE D'ANGOULÊME.

MARGUERITE D'ANGOULÊME was born at the Château d'Angoulême on the 18th of April, 1493. She was consequently two years older than her brother Francis, with whom she was brought up at Amboise by a venerable lady—a model of every virtue—whose name is not mentioned by the chronicler, Charles de Sainte Marthe; but it is presumed she was Madame de Châtillon.

When Marguerite was seventeen, Louis XII. decided to marry her to the Duke d'Alençon, a prince puny and weak in person, and irresolute by nature—a sorry match in all respects but birth for the Princess. No children were born of this union.

Marguerite's beauty has been much eulogized. Her portraits, however, do not justify this repute. She was extremely like her brother, with strongly-marked features, scarcely in accord with received notions of feminine beauty. Her expression, never-

theless, redeemed them by its charming kindness, the soft intelligence of her eyes, the extreme delicacy and grace of her smile.

From infancy Marguerite was gentle, caressing, and docile. She was fond of study ; like her brother, she took an interest in everything ; but she was more diligent and persevering than Francis, and at fifteen it was said of her that ‘ wisdom beamed from her eyes.’ In character, however, she was milder than her mother and brother. She was not one to command, but to obey. Hers was a complex nature, characterized more by contrasts and variety than by strength or originality. Her writings in both poetry and prose are feeble. She had not the gift of seeing and judging things in their entirety, nor had she a creative genius. Her poems are wanting in imagination. They are either imitations of the antique, such as ‘ L’Histoire des Satyrs et des Nymphes ;’ or psychological love-ditties, such as ‘ La Coche ;’ or religious treatises, like ‘ Le Miroir d’une âme pécheresse.’ Besides these, she wrote comedies, pastorals, *jeux d’esprit*, songs, roundlays, and sonnets. Her comedies consist of two burlesques, on the pros and cons of marriage, and a sort of mystery, in which the chief personages are God, the devil, angels, tyrants, doctors, shepherds, and captains in heterogeneous confusion, with here and there a chorus of angels or comic songs. Her

stories have been unjustly condemned as licentious. They are a collection of Court anecdotes related in the crude and somewhat lax language of the day. The personages introduced in them are for the most part historical figures. In all her works there is much naïveté, tenderness, and elevation, but nothing profound, striking, or original.

Strange as it may seem, Marguerite's special taste was for theology, and on this subject she corresponded with her spiritual director, Briconnet, Bishop of Meaux.

The letters of both seem in the present day little short of ridiculous, and abound with the most grotesque theories on sacred mysteries.

Modest and unpretending, Marguerite was at the same time curious to learn everything. Her tutors, Robert Hurault and Pierre Paradis, were astonished at her attainments. She read Erasmus, and understood Sophocles. Briconnet wrote to her : 'If there were a learned man capable of teaching grammar in one word, rhetoric in another, philosophy in another, the seven liberal arts in another, you would fly like lightning to him.' Marguerite had a well-stocked and retentive memory, but her imagination was artificial, and her mind wanting in brilliancy and strong reasoning faculties.

She wrote most of her stories in her litter, as she travelled, for when at home she had more serious

occupations. Brantôme tells us he learnt this from his grandmother, who accompanied her on her journeys as Lady of Honour, and had charge of the Princess's writing materials.

Marguerite's letters are far more interesting than her literary productions, in which she was prone to be subtile, artificial, and pedantic, whereas in her correspondence she revealed her natural self, and showed how superior her heart was to her imagination. Her kindness, her tenderness of spirit, were unwearied ; as daughter and sister she was a model ; as a friend she was constant and courageous. Her attentions to her mother were the more touching, because Louise had neglected her daughter, concentrating her thoughts and aspirations on her son. Marguerite always feared the effect of emotion or a shock on her mother's enfeebled health. She studied how to comfort and please her. In one of her letters she wrote : ' Madame has left me here, with a part of her furniture, her parrot, and her jesters. I am fond of them, because they afford her amusement.'

Louise had the happiness of being adored by her children—she spoke of them as 'Our Trinity.' Marguerite's part in the trio was one of abnegation ; Francis was the centre of his mother's ambition and his sister's love, in which was a vein of maternal solicitude for a brother younger than herself, whom she regarded as a superior being. From his child-

hood the handsome, courageous, clever Francis, with his title of King, was a hero in the eyes of his fond sister. This feeling, which owed in some measure its origin to the feudal idea, was intensified by Marguerite's religious sentiments; it took at once the form of submission, respect, and adoration. Her letters to her brother bear the impress of her excessive humility and tenderness. In one she wrote :

'I go to join you as one to whom I owe the love and obedience due to father, brother, husband ; and, indeed, I could only love husband or child insomuch as they were of the same mind with me, and willing to die in your service.'

Francis answered his sister with the cold egotism common to beings accustomed to be idolized. He was none the less a kind brother ; he was attached to her, needed her affection, her presence, her help, and appealed to it constantly. He styled her fondly 'Ma Mignonne'—the Marguerite of Marguerites. She was precious to him as a confidante in whom he could place full trust, and yet there was an immeasurable distance between the two affections, which Marguerite herself thus characterizes :

'I pray you,' she wrote, 'let me be to you a small portion of what you are so infinitely to me, and will be for ever in my thoughts.'

Such was the great and painful contrast; still, Marguerite was resigned to it, though she suffered,

as men or women must aways suffer under the influence of an uncontrollable but half-requited sentiment, which invariably wearies more than it charms the object. Marguerite's disappointment often betrayed itself, in spite of her natural gaiety. She grieved in her innermost soul over her shortcomings ; her unselfish, devoted nature was incapable of reproaching her brother ; she blamed herself alone, and became more humble and more pious. She was imbued with deep religious feelings, and, without embracing the Huguenots' doctrines, she was often present at their services ; but the Catholic Church was her brother's church, from which she could not separate herself ; but, like many women, she adhered to such details of faith and practice as were congenial to her. Hers was a mystical personal faith, independent of dogma, and indifferent to authority ; it was rather an intimate communion with the Divine ideal, which purified and ennobled her life and actions with a peculiar spirituality. We find traces of this in her writings, her letters, stories, pastorals, but above all in her poems.

‘Saillez dehors, mon âme, je vous prye,
Du triste corps tout plein de fascherie
Où vous estes en obscure prison,
Pour parvenir à la belle maison
Avecq les saintz et leur confrarie.’

And, again, in the stanzas after the death of her niece Charlotte :

' Respondez-moy, ô douerce âme vivante,
Qui par la mort qui les folz épouvrante
Avez esté d'un petit corps delivré.

* * * * *

Dictez comment en la cour triomphante
De vostre roy et père este contente.

* * * * *

Respondez-moy !

Las ! mon enfant, parlez à vostre tante,
Que tant laissez après vous languisante
En désirant que peine et mort me livre ;
Vie m'est mort, par désir de vous suyvre,
Pour soulaiger ma douleur vehemente.

Respondez-moy !

These plaintive transports, far from enervating her spirits, rendered her more resolute and sympathizing. The principal trait in her character was the force and breadth of her humanity. Persecution of any kind inspired her with horror; the suffering and the oppressed were her adopted friends. In an age of despotism and intolerance, she was swayed by a high sense of justice. She felt that freedom of thought and conscience was the basis of moral greatness. She was neither a politician nor a philosopher, but she was endowed with a sympathy with all that was great and good, and she made herself the champion of right. Throughout her life she defended Huguenots, philosophers, and *savants*. The heroism of her race revealed itself in this persistent effort to do good.

After her marriage Marguerite resided at the Château d'Alençon. There, during her husband's absence at the wars, she employed her leisure in her favourite studies, and in the companionship of her friends and men of letters, who at this period gathered round her. After her brother's accession to the throne, she spent part of each year at Court, and she was also present at all solemn receptions and gaieties, joined every royal progress, took part in the conduct of State affairs, and followed the northern and southern campaigns with keen interest.

When Francis undertook the war in Italy, Marguerite joined her mother at Lyons. They both occupied apartments at the Celestine Convent, in order to be within reach of tidings. There they learnt the news of the defeat at Pavia. The lamentations and grief of the two royal ladies were indescribable, until they received the first letters from Francis, when their anxiety and alarm were appeased. Marguerite answered her brother: 'Since the bearer of your letter has arrived, Madame's strength has revived; day and night she is occupied with your affairs, therefore have no cause for anxiety, either touching your kingdom or your children.' And again, some days after, she wrote: 'Madame daily receives news of your children. They are well, and handsome as they are virtuous. M. d'Angoulême is specially charming.'

M. d'Alençon, as already told, fell ill, and Marguerite forgetting her indignation at his want of courage, nursed him with tender care.

'Your poor sister,' she informed Francis, 'is writing to you from the bedside of M. d'Alençon. He desires me to present his humble respects to you, and to say that, could he have seen you before his death, he should have gone happier to Paradise. But all is in God's hand.'

At the Duke's death Marguerite's sorrow was unfeigned. Her brother tried to console her. 'Your two letters,' she wrote, 'have comforted me; I am now as you wish and command me to be; your words have such empire over my obstinate state that they convert my regrets for the past into ardent hopes for the future. No consolation can come home to my heart so much as the hope of your speedy liberation, which alone sustains life in the mother and the daughter. Ever since the two first days, when I was overwhelmed unreasonably, no one has seen me shed a tear, or look sad.'

Marguerite seconded her mother in State affairs, and in conciliating princes and nobles; at the same time she continued her correspondence with her brother, and wrote to Montmorency, whose good fortune in being able to assist in liberating the King she envied.

'Assuredly,' she wrote, 'my life long I shall regret

my inability to do for him what you are doing ; for, though my will and wish are stronger even than yours, fate is adverse to me, inasmuch as, being a woman, the task is difficult.'

Francis, during the long and complicated negotiations, having lost all hope of being set free on Spanish soil, pined and sickened. He entreated his mother to come to him, but her age and health did not allow of her undertaking the risk of so long and fatiguing a journey, and Marguerite was sent in her stead.

'I need not tell you,' she wrote, 'how sweet obedience is to me ; you know full well my happiness in going to you. God help me ! Though my heart and affection are so true and strong, I cannot but fear my incapacity in this delicate and precious mission.' She left Lyons by water, the journey by land being fraught with peril. Her mother accompanied her for some distance on the Rhone.

'Madame is good enough to bear me company for five or six days on the Rhone, and if her body were as strong as her will, she would soon have gone whither I am bound by sea.'

Louise bade farewell to Marguerite at Pont St. Esprit, Marguerite continuing her route to Aigues-Mortes, then the chief French port on the Mediterranean. With her were several gentlemen, appointed to aid and advise her in her difficult task, and a numerous suite of ladies.

Stormy weather delayed her sailing for several weeks. At length a calm set in, and she embarked on the 27th August for Palamos, whence she announced her safe arrival and kind reception to her brother, for whose deliverance she was to work so zealously. Montmorency would possibly be a trifle jealous, but nothing affected or discouraged her loving and true heart. ‘Nothing shall be accounted a cost to enable me to render you this service, even to the scattering of my ashes to the winds. No task shall be too difficult, too strange, or too mean to enable me to purchase consolation, repose and honour.’

From Barcelona to Madrid Marguerite travelled in a litter; part of her suite on horseback escorted her. On her way she constantly had pen in hand, and wrote verses as follows :

‘ Le désir du bien que j’attends
Me donne de travail matière :
Une heure me dure cent ans,
Et me semble que ma lytière
Ne bouge ou retourne en arrière,
Tant j’ay de m’advancer desir.
O quelle est longue, la carrière,
Où gist à la fin mon plaisir !

‘ Je regarde de tous costez
Pour voir s’il n’arrive personne,
Pariant sans cesse, n’en doutbez
Dieu que santé à mon Roy donne.

Quand nul ne voy, l'œil j'abandonne
 À plorer ; puis sur le papier,
Un peu de ma douleur j'ordonne.
 Voilà mon douloureux mestier.

'Oh ! qu'il sera le bien venu
 Celuy qui, frappant à ma porte,
Dira : le Roy est revenu
 En sa santé très bonne et forte.
Alors sa sœur plus mal que morte
 Courra baiser le messager
Qui telles nouvelles apporte
 Que son frère est hors de danger.'

But the good news did not come. Marguerite reached Madrid to find the King dying. His own and the Emperor's physicians gave no hope of his recovery. The President de Selves relates that all the signs of death were evident : he had lost speech and sight, and recognised no one. Marguerite at once summoned all the French in Madrid : the companions of Francis's captivity, the prelates, nobles, soldiers, and servants. An altar was erected in the prison chamber at which the Archbishop of Embrun celebrated Mass ; the whole assembly received the Holy Communion, and immediately afterwards the prelate, approaching the bedside of the King, who seemed in a kind of lethargy, entreated him to raise his eyes and look on the sacred Host.

'I saw him,' says de Selves, 'at the moment of the elevation. When the Archbishop exhorted him, my sovereign lord (who neither saw nor heard) turned

his head, raised his hands, and murmured, “ My God will restore me both in body and soul. I beg of you to let me receive Him.” As it was doubtful whether he would be able to swallow the wafer, Madame la Duchesse caused it to be divided in two portions, one of which she took ; the other was given to the King. Both received it with such earnest compunction and devotion that there was not a dry eye in the assembly. From that hour the King began to mend,—a miracle effected by sisterly love, for which Marguerite thanked Heaven.

The King’s convalescence progressing favourably, Marguerite hastened to take the first steps for his liberation. The Emperor was at Toledo, and thither she hastened full of hope. Charles V. went a league on the road to meet her, followed by the Archbishop and several nobles. He received her with the greatest courtesy, conducted her to the palace of Don Diego di Mendoza, Count of Melito, where apartments had been prepared for her.

‘ There,’ wrote Marguerite to her brother, ‘ the Emperor wished to be alone with me, one of my ladies only keeping guard at the door. He spoke most kindly and politely of his satisfaction at your recovery, and of his hope of your friendship. To-day, after dinner, by the advice of the Viceroy (of Naples), I shall seek an audience of the Emperor, and we will work for your deliverance. This even-

ing I will let you know all that passes. I entreat you, my sovereign lord, to assume an air of weakness and weariness in presence of Alarçon. The weaker you seem, the stronger it will make my arguments, and the sooner I shall be able to send you word that you are free.'

Fear soon followed hope, as will be seen from the following letter :

'MONSIEUR,

'I have not written sooner in expectation of being able to announce the beginning of your affair. I saw the Emperor yesterday. His manner was cold. He took me aside in his room with one of my ladies, but his tone was stiff and ceremonious. He referred me to his Council, and promised me an answer to-day. Then he led me to his sister, the Queen, with whom I remained a long time, and who was most amiable. She starts on her journey to-morrow, and I am going to take leave of her. I think she goes more out of obedience than pleasure. She has not much freedom. Whilst I was talking to her, the Viceroy (de Lanoy) came to tell me the Emperor wished to speak with me, and I had to go to his apartments.'

Charles V. continued to express himself in the most courteous and friendly manner until business

was mentioned, when his tone instantly became imperious, and intolerant of contradiction. Babou informed Montmorency by letter how stormy were these discussions, how haughty and threatening the attitude of the Spaniards.

‘We replied calmly and humbly ; so they gained nothing, and were at their wits’ end to sweeten what they had made sour. We separated without having achieved anything. Madame will go to see the Queen of Portugal, to whom she will pour out her lamentations. I will let you know the result.’

Marguerite’s letters to Montmorency evince alternately fear, hope, and discouragement.

‘The only dawn of better things I can see in the affair is in the kind words of the Emperor, who assured me he would do what would surprise me, and would set me at rest.’

And again :

‘They are so astonished they do not know what to say, and I find their astonishment so woeful that it alone encourages me to hope. This evening I shall acquaint the King of the result, and wait his good pleasure. I assure you I should be without anxiety had I to deal with men of honour and high principle ; but the contrary is the case. Everyone tells me the Emperor loves the King ; but the proofs of it are meagre. His health is the main thing now ; but God has restored it, so fear nothing on that

score. I trust that, thanks to procrastination and dissimulation, they may change their minds. Be that as it may, their threats and their language are so mild that I hope more than I fear from them. You will read my letter to the King.'

Day after day went by. The conference continued, but made no progress. The King remained a prisoner. Marguerite was indignant, took temporary refuge in a convent, and ceased her interviews with the Emperor.

She wrote to her brother :

'The Viceroy sent me word to go to the Emperor. I replied by M. de Senlys that I had never been but at the Emperor's request, and that should he wish to confer with me, I was to be found in this convent ; but from one o'clock to five I have waited in vain for an answer.'

'It is three days since I left the walls of this cloister. It beseems me not to play a courtier's part, nor yet to gain over the servants of the master who promised you that I should discuss my affairs with him solely. I will wait for the result of to-day's proceedings, and to-morrow, after learning your commands, I will obey them to the best of my ability. It strikes me that by holding our own with firmness we shall oblige them to change their tactics. We will release you by the grace of God ; but I entreat you, since they go to work so basely, not to be im-

patient if the negotiations lag before that end can be attained which is so much desired by

. ‘Your MARGUERITE.’

‘Considering how long I have been kept waiting, and the manner with which I am treated, I am resolved to go to the Emperor after dinner to ascertain the conclusion of the affair from him, of which I will immediately advise you. The Viceroy came to me last evening, and seemed sorry not to be able to help me as much as he wishes. I gave vent to my vexation and sorrow as well as to my anger at the Queen’s letter, and at not having seen the Emperor for the last few days. I told him frankly that they were wanting in good faith and good will. I begged him to do away with dissimulation, and to tell me candidly their determination. I shall see what has been done this morning, and shall speak according to their resolution, and this evening I will write you my report, assuring you, my sovereign, that the office of petitioner to such unreasonable persons is even more painful than that of sick-nurse to you.

‘Above all, I pray you do not suffer their strange deceitfulness to disturb you, for when I went to ask permission to depart, I found the Emperor so amiable that I fancy he is afraid of my going away. If only you can bridle your impatience, I think we shall win the game, after all. They would like to detain me here to further their own design.’

These changing moods indicate an impulsive, tender woman's nature rather than the tact of a political negotiator. Charles V., under the forms of strained politeness, maintained his demands. He again renewed his pretensions to Burgundy, which the King rejected with equal firmness. All Marguerite's efforts proved unavailing, and after so much anguish and uncertainty, she was obliged to return to France, leaving her brother still captive. She would have gladly remained, divested of her political mission, to be the King's companion, and she would have dismissed her suite with the exception of three of her women; but even this request was harshly refused by the Emperor, intent on reducing Francis to the last extremity. So Marguerite had to prepare with all possible haste to withdraw from Spain. A safe conduct was granted her, but the shortest route—by Spanish Navarre—being closed to her, she was compelled to cross the kingdoms of Castille and Aragon, and the province of Barcelona, in the month of December, and both she and the ladies of her suite were exposed to frost, snow, and all the rigours of a severe winter. About this time an attempt was made to rescue the King, of which Perrenot de Granvelle gave the following account to Marguerite of Austria:

‘A French secretary came and warned the Emperor that there was a plot for the King's rescue.

Horses were found posted at certain distances, and an Italian officer, who was a party to the enterprise, has been arrested. But the affair is kept secret.'

According to the same authority, it was proposed to substitute for the King a negro, who had access to his chamber. A discontented valet revealed the scheme to the Emperor, to avenge himself of a box on the ear he had received from M. de la Rechepot. The Duchesse d'Alençon doubtless favoured the undertaking, though no trace of it transpires in any French document relative to the captivity.

On Marguerite's return from Toledo to Madrid, to bid adieu to Francis, she found him resolved to die a prisoner rather than yield to the Emperor's demands. Consequently, he furnished his sister with letters patent to crown the Dauphin King, with a reservation clause in case of his own release. This act was sealed with the Privy Seal in default of the Great Seal of the realm. Marguerite passed her last night at Madrid by her brother's bedside, her hand in his, seeking thus to retard the hour of separation. The parting was heartrending. Marguerite set out on her journey on horseback. She wrote from every stage to her brother, and also to Montmorency, who remained with Francis.

'*Alcala, November 20th, 1525. To Montmorency.*
—With regard to myself, physically I am only too

well, but my spirit is always with him I have left. Comfort me by sending me news of him as often as possible, and if you hear any good news, pray advise me of it.'

On the road a gentleman of the Duke of l'Infantado's household came to beg of her, in his master's name to halt at his castle of Guadalaxara, about twenty leagues distant from Madrid. The men of the Duke's family were, by the Emperor's orders, forbidden to see the royal lady, but the Duke's sister and her daughters were to have the honour of receiving her. Marguerite accepted the courteous invitation, and was treated with the utmost sympathy and respect.

'I arrived here,' she wrote to Montmorency, 'on the 22nd November, 1525, and found a very affectionate welcome, and people very sorry to see the King where he is. The kind Countess was glad to know he is well in health. I did not expect this; it soothes and consoles me greatly. I shall dine here to-morrow, and then go to stay the night at a place four leagues distant.'

To the King she wrote: 'Even those who have only seen you, who are not bound to praise you, are enthusiastic about you. This good Countess, the Duke's sister, with whom I have spent the evening, begs me to kiss your hands and feet for her, and to tell you how earnestly she prays God for your

deliverance. I have not seen any of her nieces—they are indisposed; but before I leave to-morrow I mean to pay them a visit. I shall only go four leagues on my way to-morrow, in the hope of hearing from you, and, if need be, of returning to you the sooner. Believe me, to hear that you will soon be able to ride made me forget my weary journey; for, Monseigneur, the further I go from you the more painful do I feel the separation, which would be intolerable to me were it not for my desire to obey you, and to render you greater service when absent than when present—otherwise I should not have had strength to leave you.'

'*From Sequençá, December 3rd.*—The bearer of this will tell you of the kind hospitality of M. Bryanti, of the Countess, and of the Duke's daughters, as well as of the present of the mules, such fine, good animals, that I long for you to try them from Madrid to Lyons. I pass the night at Medina Cœli, at the Duke's son-in-law's, where I expect to meet Brion.'

And thus she continued to write daily, making her journey by easy stages, when suddenly she learned that Charles V., imagining she was the bearer of the King's act of abdication, purposed arresting her at the expiration of the term of her safe-conduct if she should still be on Spanish territory. Marguerite, apprised of this intention, hurried forward, in spite of the difficulties of the road, sometimes making

only five leagues in seven hours. At last, however, the frontier was crossed, and she was able to celebrate Christmas at Narbonne. Her mother met her a month later at Roussillon, in Dauphiné; whence she writes to the King a short letter: ‘Only to assure you that Madame’s health is good, notwithstanding her long sorrow.’

A day or two later she gives him news of the condition of affairs at home:

‘When I try to speak of you with two or three persons—as soon as your name is uttered, I am surrounded—all come to listen, and constrain me to give them news of you, their tears accompany what I relate, and their prayers rise to Heaven. The farther I penetrate into your kingdom, the more apparent it is that you are at Madrid; for notwithstanding the good order that reigns everywhere, this country is like a body without a head, full of energy and life to redeem you, but languid and lifeless, knowing you to be far away at Madrid. As for myself, the occupation of those trying days in Spain was less fatiguing, more endurable to me than my life of repose in France, where my fancy is always active, and torments me more than actual pain.’

She gives some details of his children:

‘M. d’Angoulême has had the measles with high fever; M. d’Orléans took them afterwards, but had

a milder attack ; then Madame Madeleine followed suit, but had them slightly ; last of all, the Dauphin took the complaint, and suffered least of all. They are all well again. The Dauphin studies assiduously, voluntarily undertaking much besides his lessons. He is not so passionate as he was. M. d'Orléans is steadfast at his books, and says he means to be very good ; but M. d'Angoulême knows more than either, and says the most surprising things—you would be astonished to hear him. Little Margot is very like me, and is more beautiful than Mademoiselle d'Angoulême.—Signed by her whose life is death if not employed in your service.

‘ MARGUERITE.’

CHAPTER VII.

FRANCIS REGAINS HIS FREEDOM.

FRANCIS I. might resign himself to die in prison, but France could not consent to this sacrifice. The King was the impersonation of its unity. His prolonged absence gave rise to disorders, daily increasing in peril; the anarchy which followed Bourbon's revolt had been checked by the King's prodigious energy, and by the authority of his person; but, since the defeat at Pavia, it again broke forth with greater strength, and Louise's regency was harassed by a thousand difficulties.

Louise of Savoy had never been popular. Since the accession of her son she had been the subject of satires and criticism, less on account of her gallant intrigues than for the manner in which she allowed her favourites to administer the country. Moreover, she was ambitious, grasping, and incapable of royal generosity. Her haughty, overbearing manners, and the total want of uprightness in her dealings,

rendered her antipathetic to the nation. Her regency was odious to the people, especially after the disaster at Pavia. Her political capacity, her courage, her assiduous diligence in business, counted for nothing. She was branded as the authoress of the country's misfortunes, and a unanimous cry of reproach was raised against her. Duprat, her favourite, continued his exactions and his violence, unchecked. After his wife's death he took holy orders, and thus was enabled to secure for himself many vacant benefices, regardless of the liberty left to certain Chapters by the Concordat. The intervention of Parliament exasperated him, and Parliament vented its irritation by impeding the action of Government, constantly refusing obedience, and remonstrating against it.

Numerous pamphlets and satires, expressive of hatred and contempt, were written on Duprat, and also on the Regent, who, during her stay in Lyons, might have heard some of these scurrilous songs in the streets of that city.

The nobility and the clergy were also at variance. Distress was rife, and disturbances naturally ensued, and the summoning of the States-General was called for; in a word, disorganization prevailed from one end of the kingdom to the other.

Louise's health began to fail. Marguerite, who was designated as Regent in case of Louise's death,

possessed none of the talents essential to power. The three royal children were minors ; everything was adverse to the country's weal.

Louise's anxiety was made manifest in her letters, and her fears were shared by the nation. The Provincial Assemblies insisted strongly on the King's release.

On the other hand Charles V., unwilling to lose the fruits of his victory, was anxious for a settlement. He therefore accredited a minister, Louis van Praet, to the Regent's Court, whose task was to persuade her to accept the Emperor's terms. The letters of Louis van Praet and of Lanoy to Marguerite of Austria reveal the difficulties that beset the Empire. They entreated her to persuade the Emperor to make concessions, in order to come to an arrangement with Francis. His terms were too hard, the King would never consent to cede Burgundy ; he was ill—in danger, said his doctors—he might die, and then all would be lost. They were even desirous that Marguerite, upon whose moderation and justice they relied, should openly encourage the negotiations for peace, which were continued after the Duchesse d'Alençon's return to France, and even advanced a step, as is proved by a curious letter from Charles V. to Louis van Praet. The French delegates were less obstinate in the matter of Burgundy, provided the King were replaced by

hostages, inasmuch as it was only when free that he could treat for the cession of a province. What guarantee, moreover, would there be for the King's future liberty if Burgundy were made over to the Emperor while Francis was still his prisoner?

The Regent thereupon sent fresh instructions to her ambassadors. Her anxieties were increasing daily. No matter the cost, Francis must be liberated. They were to do their best for Burgundy. Mental reservations would not be wanting. Francis' friends and advisers, moreover, were urgent. They impressed upon him the dangers with which France was threatened by the unscrupulous conduct of Charles V., who violated all the laws of chivalry by claiming Burgundy from an enemy vanquished in honourable warfare. They must meet the Emperor with his own weapons.

The scruples of Francis were at length overcome. He consented to play the Emperor false. But Burgundy should only be torn from France by main force, and under protest.

Thus the Treaty of Madrid was signed on January 14th, 1526, and Charles V. triumphed. On all essential points he had gained the day. Francis gave up not only Italy, but his suzerainty in French Flanders and Artois, so long integral parts of French territory, and ceded, together with Burgundy, the Charolais and the Viscounty of Auxonne. He

also agreed that, six weeks after his return to France, Hesdin and other towns should be given up. He undertook to restore to the Constable and his adherents their titles and estates; to pay to England the Emperor's debt of five hundred thousand crowns; and break off his alliance with the southern Italian princes, and with the Duke of Guelderland and Lamarck, his northern confederates; and finally he promised to follow Charles V. in a crusade against the Turks. His marriage with Queen Eleanor was to be the sacred pledge of this treaty, which Francis gave his word to ratify in the first town on the frontier of his kingdom. Four months later it was to be ratified by the States-General of France and Burgundy, and duly registered by Parliament; in default of which the King would surrender himself prisoner. Meanwhile his two eldest sons were to be held as hostages.

The Spanish Chancellor, Gatinara, found these conditions so preposterous that he refused to attach the Imperial Seal to them, whereupon Charles V., taking the parchment from him, sealed it with his own hands.

Rarely was this cold, concentrated nature intoxicated by success; but in this case Charles V. forgot to calculate the future risk, and that the exchange of the King for hostages exposed him to the loss of all he had won. Three letters of the Emperor at this

crisis—one addressed to his Aunt Marguerite of Austria, one to the King, and one to Louise of Savoy—remain as proof of his unusual excitement. In that to Marguerite of Austria he speaks without reserve. His exactions are of the mildest kind, and he himself is full of moderation. His only aim is the glory of God, the welfare of Christianity, and of the Church. If he had been in any way exacting towards Francis, it was only to oblige him to join in a crusade against the infidels. Now his enemies are laid low, Europe will enjoy peace, happiness, and prosperity.

To Francis and to Louise he writes with effusive tenderness. He opens his heart to them with expansive affection ; he is overjoyed at having regained a brother in the King. He is delighted to give his sister as daughter to Louise. May he not truly style her his mother, his good mother evermore? It was a ‘great happiness to me,’ he writes, ‘on my return to Madrid to find the King in a better state of health and feeling than he had been in of late, and I can assure you that my affection and friendship for him are of the best and truest, and that nothing will be left undone that I have promised to do.’

Not for an instant did he doubt the fulfilment of the treaty. Confident on this point alone, he was distrustful on all others. The Treaty of Madrid had

to be countersigned by the Regent and principal officers of the kingdom, and measures taken for the exchange of the King for his sons. During this interval of nearly two months Francis was as strictly guarded as before. In vain the gentlemen attached to his service solicited that more latitude might be granted him. The same precautions were maintained. Francis's impatient nature chafed and rebelled, and he again fell ill from sheer irritation and vexation of spirit.

During this illness, de Lanoy arrived from the Emperor to negotiate the marriage between the King and his sister Eleanor. Lanoy found Francis laid up with fever, so weak he could scarcely raise himself in his bed. A sad betrothal, of which he would have the remembrance through life. Somedays after, the King recovered, and, with characteristic gallantry, his first care was to write to Madame Eleanor ; but by what title was he to address her ? He referred to the Emperor to know his wishes. Charles V. authorized him to style her by the endearing name of wife, ‘which before God she already is ;’ so the doleful love-letter was despatched by Brion. The Queen answered it immediately.

The following night a fire broke out in the prison. Everyone was astir ; the alarm was great ; the King was hurried from his room by two soldiers who never lost sight of their prisoner. After this

accident, the Archbishop of Embrun petitioned Alarçon to assign a safer and more salubrious residence to the King, but Alarçon, in the name of the Emperor, refused. Nevertheless, the following Monday Francis was allowed to attend vespers in the Church of Notre Dame des Touches, where he went mounted on a mule, and surrounded by a body-guard. On his return, ladies in their litters approached to salute him, and the people greeted him with acclamations. Such a cordial welcome suddenly revived the King. He dismounted, observing to his gentleman—M. de la Barre—that it gave him new life, and that he felt strong enough to go a-hunting.

The next morning, Tuesday, he went to hear Mass in the chapel of a Countess whose name has not transpired ; dined with her, and afterwards they visited a convent together. The nuns were greatly curious to see the King. More than thirty poor creatures afflicted with the king's-evil were assembled for the royal hand to touch. La Barre wrote a vivid description of this event to the Duchesse d'Alençon.

Francis's spirits rose with the expectation of freedom on hearing of the Emperor's return, on February 13th, from Toledo to Madrid. He had no doubt but that his future brother-in-law would relent, and that it would be impossible for him to retain

Francis a prisoner. Charles V., however, proved equal to the occasion, paid two visits to his royal captive, and, far from feeling commiseration for him, supplemented the Treaty of Madrid with fresh demands for money, and for the independent sovereignty of Bourbon. Francis promised to pay tribute on this province, but refused consent to give up the sovereignty.

On the 16th of February, Madame Eleanor arrived at Alcala. The Emperor immediately went to escort Francis on a visit to his betrothed bride at the Château of Illescas, where Eleanor, on the previous evening, had joined Germaine de Foix, the young and beautiful widow of the King of Aragon.

The two monarchs dined at Yestaphe, and slept at the Château of Torreian, and the next day reached Illescas about three o'clock in the afternoon.

Madame Eleanor received them at the head of the staircase at the end of a long gallery. On her left was Queen Germaine, on her right the Constable of Castille, her first gentleman usher, followed by her ladies-of-honour, among whom were the Marquise de Zevette and the Countess of Nassau.

The Emperor presented the King to his sister. She was about to kiss his hand, but Francis was too gallant to permit this act of homage, and kissed her on both cheeks; her brother did the same,

then all proceeded to the reception-hall, where four seats were placed under a canopy. The King sat next Queen Eleanor, the Emperor next to Queen Germaine. They conversed together for some time; then the ladies of the suite danced, after which the Emperor and the King returned to pass the night at Torreian. A second visit was paid at Illescas the day following, the Princess this time, at the Emperor's request, performing a Spanish dance before her *fiancé*. Francis and Eleanor were not to meet again until after the King's return to France. Meanwhile his bride-elect would wait at Vittoria, on the frontier, whither Don Pedro Henriquez de Velasco, Constable of Castille, was to bring the young hostages to her, and when the ratifications were exchanged Eleanor was to convey back the Princes to their father. Thus they expected all to be united in France before Holy Week.

The President de Selves was the first to leave Madrid to prepare the procedure for the legal exchange. Francis entrusted him with a letter for his mother, in which he wrote :

'This bad fellow is about to see you. I will not tell you what service he has rendered me by letter, hoping soon to do so in person.'

At length on the 21st of February the King himself set out, accompanied by a numerous guard commanded by de Lanoy and Alarçon. Their

second halt was at the Duke de l'Infantado's, where Marguerite had been so well received. A stag-hunt was arranged for the King's diversion ; so he spent a day in that hospitable house, where one of the daughters fell desperately in love with him. From Burgos Francis sent Brion with despatches to his mother, that all might be in readiness for his reception, and to give her the best news of his health, saying he never walked better, and already began to feel with delight the air of France. He requested his mother, to supply him with money, as he was without a crown-piece. He wrote more urgently on this subject from Vittoria. On the part of Spain everything was ready ; they were only awaiting the arrival of the French noble who was bringing the Regent's full powers. The nearer the frontier, the more irksome was the surveillance of the Spanish guard. Francis loathed the sight of them. At St. Sebastien, he expressed a wish to go to Mass. De Lanoy answered that a priest should celebrate it in the King's private chamber.

At last the Regent's messengers arrived, accredited with full powers. A thrill of emotion vibrated throughout France. The Parliaments assembled, the churches were crowded ; there were public prayers and processions on all sides, a general thanksgiving to God for the King's return. His mother, his sister, the whole Court went to welcome

him at Bayonne. Francis wrote to Charles V. out of courtesy to beg that his wife might be allowed to approach the frontier, and he bade adieu to Spain without a thought of returning thither. The exchange of prisoners then began.

The country in a circumference of twenty leagues was evacuated by troops, and by the inhabitants for three leagues round; no ship or boat of any description was allowed to approach the mouth of the Bidassoa within five leagues, with the exception of two vessels of the same size destined for the use of the twelve personages employed in the service. Montmorency was at the head of the French, and de Lanoy of the Spanish negotiation. The two boats, on one of which was the King of France and his suite, and on the other the hostages and their suite, were to start at the same moment, and to cross the stream simultaneously. All these arrangements were strictly adhered to.

The President de Selves wrote to the Paris Parliament :

‘On the 18th of March, at seven o’clock in the morning, the freedom of the King was obtained on the river between Fontarabia and Hendaye. The Viceroy of Naples, M. de Lanoy, handed his Majesty over, and received in return their Highnesses, the hostages. All went off peaceably, as had been arranged.’

M. de Selves makes no mention of the King's emotion at seeing his sons—from whom he had been so long separated—pass, without being able to approach them. His paternal heart may have been full of tender yearnings; but his long imprisonment and his ardent thirst for liberty mitigated the trial.

So soon as his foot touched French soil, he threw himself on horseback, crying, ‘Once more I am a king!’ and without halting, he galloped to Saint Jean de Luz and thence pushed on to Bayonne. Before going to embrace his mother and sister, who were waiting impatiently to see him, he entered the cathedral, and there thanked God for his release.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TREATY OF MADRID BROKEN—THE ADVENTURES AND DEATH OF THE CONSTABLE DE BOURBON.

FRANCIS's long captivity had wrought a singular change, both in his mind and body. He seemed to have lost all his fire and youthful elasticity. State duties were wearisome to him. His native air was advised by his doctors : so, after a few days at Bayonne and Mont de Marsan, he journeyed to Cognac, whither his mother accompanied him.

There he gave himself up to deer-hunting with passionate ardour, and was all but killed one day by a fall from his horse. Serious thoughts and serious business he set aside. Nevertheless, they were thrust upon him. Louis van Praet, the Emperor's ambassador, demanded the ratification of the treaty. Francis deferred, delayed, and shuffled. His explanations, dated 2nd of April, reached de Lanoy at Vittoria on the 7th ; the same day he forwarded them to the Emperor. Lanoy had never supposed

the treaty would be executed. He wished to wash his hands of the whole affair, and he supplemented Francis's despatch by a letter from himself to the Emperor, requesting he might return to his post in Italy, where storm-clouds were gathering, and the young French Princes could be left to the care of Queen Eleanor and the Constable of Castille.

De Lanoy's despatches followed Charles V. to the South of Spain, where he had gone to contract a marriage with the Infanta of Portugal. His reply to Lanoy's request to return to Italy was an order to go at once to France, and compel the King to fulfil his promise, or to give himself up as a prisoner. Lanoy obeyed, and was most courteously received. All honour was paid to him ; but objections were raised to the treaty. The States-General must meet, and in the meanwhile an assembly of princes, nobles, and bishops solemnly declared that the King could not alienate any portion of French territory without breaking his coronation oath, which had precedence over all others. The Deputies of Burgundy confirmed this verdict, and declared that they would oppose the accomplishment of the Treaty of Madrid with armed force if necessary.

Francis was in dire straits. His conscience smote him for the violation of his given word. He was anxious and alarmed for the fate of his sons—the

hostages. He had received letters from Spain, stating that the Duke of Orleans was ill. Lanoy, too, acknowledged that the Spanish climate did not agree with the Princes, and urged him to keep his word in order that all might end happily, and the children be returned to their fatherland. Francis inquired if no compromise could be found for the cession of Burgundy. Would nothing else satisfy the Emperor? He offered a ransom of two millions of gold crowns (an enormous sum at that date). De Lanoy submitted this proposal to the Emperor, who rejected it summarily, reminding the King of his oath, and, in bitter wrath at being duped, he recalled de Lanoy.

Modern historians have been more severe towards Francis for his broken word than Europe was at the time. There was a general disposition to sympathize with the unfortunate monarch, rather than with his harsh conqueror. Charles V. was detested. His cold, haughty, suspicious, and deceitful nature could awaken neither admiration nor attachment. His officers trembled in his presence, and his allies looked upon him as their master. His tenacity of purpose, far from being a virtue, was due to political calculation, and served as a means of establishing his dominating power over others.

Francis possessed, on the other hand, a genial nature. His defects and his good qualities were alike

prepossessing, and his misfortunes only increased his prestige. The news of his freedom caused universal rejoicing. His breach of faith mattered little ; the end justified the means. Even the head of the Church, Clement VII., absolved him publicly from an oath taken under coercion. Henry VIII. proved his friendship by concluding an alliance with him. Italy gave signs of a revulsion in his favour. Her princes had formed a league—the ‘Holy League’—against the Emperor, with the Pope at its head. They appealed to Francis to join them. Francis consented, and resigned his pretensions to the Duchy of Milan to Sforza, on condition that he would marry a French princess. He adhered to the League, which he induced Henry VIII. to join, with the twofold purpose of establishing Italian independence, and of liberating the hostages, his sons.

France had never had so favourable an opportunity for attacking the Empire. Charles V., threatened by the Turks in Hungary, was without an ally in Europe. The remnants of his army in Italy did not amount to more than ten or twelve thousand veterans. Vandemont disputed his rights in Naples. In Germany the Protestants continued to keep up a ferment, and the State coffers were all but empty.

But Francis’s powers of activity were paralyzed by his long captivity, his love of pleasure, his anxiety for the safety of his sons ; and he contented

himself with proclaiming his adherence to the League in answer to Charles V.'s repeated summons to surrender himself prisoner.

Instead, too, of rapidly putting an army in the field, he went on negotiating, giving time for fresh divisions to develop in Italy, fomented by the skilful tactics of the Emperor. Charles amused Francis by useless parleyings ; treated with Pescaro, who ultimately betrayed both parties ; promised power to Sforza, and endeavoured to destroy the alliance between France and Venice. He excited the Colonnas against the Pope, at the same time denouncing them to Clement VII., thus sowing the seeds of discord on all sides. He succeeded in dissolving the League, and in destroying all mutual confidence among the confederates, who ended by betraying each other, some of them offering the Duchy of Milan to Francis, while others were at the same time busy levying troops in Switzerland to contest his claims. And to crown all, a quarrel arose as to the reward promised to Henry VIII. for services he had not rendered. All this was so much gain to Charles V. At strife with the Pope, he became the protector of Protestantism, and enlisted the services of old George Frundsberg, and a body of fourteen thousand lansquenets, for a crown a head and the prospect of pillaging Italy. This Frundsberg was an infuriated Huguenot, who, Brantôme

says, ordered a gold chain wherewith to hang and strangle the Pope with his own hand, on the principle of doing honour to whom honour is due. At the end of the year 1526 Italy was in a desperate state : Pescaro died on the 30th November ; Moncade held the post of Viceroy in de Lanoy's absence ; the Constable de Bourbon returned, rallied the remnants of the Imperial troops, strengthened by Frundsberg's legion (its chief having died of apoplexy whilst crossing the Alps), and assumed the command of the army. Francis at length was roused to send a small force to the North under the Marquis de Saluce, while the Spanish adventurer, Don Pedro Navarro, commanded the French fleet, and cleared the coast from invaders ; the east of the Peninsula was in the hands of the army of the League, under the Duke of Urbino ; the centre was occupied by the Papal army and the Black Band of John de Medicis, who had recently fallen at the passage of the Po, and was replaced by Horace Baglione ; and last, not least, Naples was held by the Lorrainers. These troops, without coming to any decisive engagement, marched up and down the country sacking and destroying towns and villages ; driving the native population to the last extremity of hunger and despair. Well might Michael Angelo tremble with indignation, and his great patriotic soul cry aloud for redress.

His statue of ‘Night’ is supposed to murmur : ‘O blessed sleep ! More blessed marble, which neither feels nor hears—for pity’s sake rouse me not ; speak low ; let me sleep on.’

The calm grandeur of Bourbon’s early years had vanished like some transient vision. Was it not all a dream that he was once a great prince, nearly related to the King ; that he had possessed birth, wealth, a family, and a fatherland—whose nobles were proud to flock to his banner ? that Anne de Beaujeu had adopted him as a son ; that the gentle Suzanne de Bourbon had been his loving wife—the mother of his three children ? Yes, it was a golden dream, from which the black night of his revolt divides him. Now all was changed. Bourbon had shaken the dust off his feet as a testimony against his native land ; he had spurned and insulted his own kindred. And for what ? To gratify his pride and his resentment. Where was the feudal kingdom promised him in the centre of France ? Where was the imperial bride he was to receive from Charles V. ? Where were his court of princes, his army of nobles, his triumphs and his glory ?

His patrimonial estates, confiscated by the Parliament, had without protest been annexed to the Crown. Louise, his hated enemy, had ransacked his house and furniture, profaning all the hallowed souvenirs of the dead ; his noble adherents had

been magnanimously pardoned by the King, and had entered his service ; Queen Eleanor was betrothed to his enemy ; and when, after Pavia, he hied to Madrid to claim the fulfilment of the Imperial promises, Charles V. treated him with haughty disdain, ‘as is the way,’ says the sceptical Brantôme, ‘with emperors, kings, and princes, who promise mountains of gold to win a man from his allegiance ; whom, when won, they forget to recompense, and laugh at in contempt.’

Bourbon was indeed ruined ; he was deserted, isolated ; his name was a by-word of shame ; the gateway of his hotel in Paris, facing the Louvre, was painted yellow, and its interior sowed with salt, as the custom was with the house of a traitor. At Madrid he was shunned by the Spanish nobles ; and, the Emperor having ordered the palace of one of them to be given to Bourbon for his residence, its owner swore he would set it on fire as soon as the traitor left it. His only reward was to be named commander-in-chief of the army in Italy, and a promise of the Duchy of Milan, out of which he might construct a kingdom at his leisure !

Yet, in spite of all, Bourbon was not crushed. His indomitable will, his energy, rose superior to his evil destiny ; he was heroic in the struggle ; his virile imagination lured him to seek danger, to risk his life recklessly and be reckless of the

lives of others ; he fascinated the soldiers who served under him. Though accustomed to the luxuries and elegancies of a princely life, he shared their hardships and privations. A kingdom was denied him. Well, he would be a soldier of fortune, a freebooting general, a *condottiere*. He had thirty thousand men devoted to him, all hardy and tried soldiers thirsting for booty, inured to cruelty and pillage ; henceforth they shall be his boon companions, his friends, his family, his faithful servants. The high-spirited Bourbon, in the prime of life—he was but eight-and-thirty—associated himself with this horde of villains, who, at Milan, lived on extortion and violence. The poor citizens threw themselves at Bourbon's feet and besought him to save them. The Constable promised that on payment of a tribute of thirty thousand ducats they should be left in peace. The money was paid, but Bourbon broke his word ; he plundered the churches, seized the wealthy citizens, and extorted money from them by torture. The traitor Morone bought his life at the moment he was going to be executed, on payment of twenty thousand ducats. Milan devastated, Bourbon withdrew, bent on a still more iniquitous act of vandalism.

Rome represented the two greatest civilizations of the universe. The Christian Church, with its doctrines, its legends, its apostles, and its army of saints

and martyrs, had its centre in the Eternal City—it was the focus, so to say, of justice, morality, faith and hope, contrasting with the cruelty, disorder, and dread everywhere paramount. Neither Popes nor prelates constituted the grandeur of Christian Rome, but the craving of humanity for its higher destinies revealed in the precepts of an ideal faith. This sanctuary Bourbon proposed to destroy.

Brantôme tells us that on the feast of St. John, at Bologna, a great cry of want and misery was raised by Bourbon's soldiers. He harangued them, insisting on his own privations, and then swore he would die in the effort or enrich them all. As a proof of his good intentions, he gave up all the family plate he had with him, rings, jewels, furniture, and vestments, divided them among the troops, reserving only his personal clothes and a jacket of silver tissue which he wore over his armour. The fury of the soldiers was changed to enthusiasm; the men swore they would follow him to death and destruction. They marched forward, blindly confident in their leader, they knew not whither, without artillery, munition, or provisions, trusting to chance, and singing the praises of their captain in chorus.

Bourbon told them, ‘I am a poor knight, and have not a farthing more than the poorest among you.’

Whereupon they all sang as one man :

'Let Cæsar, Annibal, and Scipio be forgotten ;
Long live our Bourbon's renown.'

When he passed in their ranks—mounted on his charger, with his eagle glance and his haughty mien, he inspired enthusiasm mingled with awe. Always a prince, he greeted his followers with courtesy, addressing inspiriting words to Germans and Spaniards in their respective mother-tongues, which he spoke as fluently as a native. On one occasion he told them his secret : 'With the help of your fidelity and accustomed valour, I trust shortly to enrich you by the sacking of the superb city of Rome. I promise to place in your hands its people, princes, and nobles ; the senators and their wives ; the prelates, and the whole college of cardinals, together with their treasures and their Pope Clement, the unworthy occupant of St. Peter's chair.' This address was received with a burst of frenzied applause. The worst passions of the *condottieri* were excited. The human torrent passed the Apennines, and swept through the Valleys of Perugia, Viterbo, and Spoleto 'like a troop of barbarians,' according to Brantôme's description, only half clad ; their garments were slashed and torn. These men were mostly criminals escaped from the hulks, branded on the shoulder, shorn of their ears, their hair on end, their

long beards all matted and dirty : they rushed impetuously like a living avalanche, devastating every place. The awe-stricken inhabitants fled before them. Woe to those who remained ! Woe especially to the women ! Their wailing and lamentations filled the air ; husbands and fathers with any feeling killed their wives and daughters rather than leave them to the mercy of brutal savages. At length they reached the Roman Campagna. At their first halt they met the Emperor's right-hand man, de Lanoy. Charles V. was the devoted son of Mother Church, but with all due respect he meant to control, but not destroy, the Papal powers. Lanoy landed at Gaeta at the head of eight thousand Spaniards. After defeating the Papal army, he granted a truce to Clement VII., and placed his Holiness under Imperial protection. He presented the treaty of peace to Bourbon, advising him to turn his steps elsewhere—a suggestion which Bourbon received with a sardonic smile. Had not de Lanoy deceived him in sending the King to Spain instead of leaving him in Italy ? How was it possible to esteem an Emperor who promised kingdoms and did not even pay his soldiers ? Bourbon would have nothing more to do with either—nothing should check him. He pursued his march forward with the acclamations of his men. They arrived at length before Rome, in front of the St. Peter's quarter—the

Apostolic Church and the Vatican were within a stone's-throw.

The Pope, relying on the truce, had taken no precautions for the defence of the city—it was not even guarded ; Bourbon could enter without resistance. On hearing of his approach, the whole population were seized with terror ; the panic disabled them from taking measures of safety. The French Ambassador alone was self-possessed ; he assembled about two thousand men, hoping to hold out until the arrival of the Marquis de Saluce. Apprised in haste of the threatened danger, he directed his small body of raw recruits towards St. Peter's. But the city walls were in ruins, and so small a garrison was utterly powerless.

In this dilemma a singular incident occurred. Bourbon went to reconnoitre the city with a handful of soldiers. An ensign stationed to guard a breach in the wall perceived the enemy, lost all presence of mind, and, with the intention of escaping into the town to give the alarm, rushed forward towards Bourbon, who, imagining the ensign was followed by an army, halted, rallied his men, and put himself on the defensive. The ensign, after advancing three hundred steps beyond the city walls, suddenly recovered his senses, perceived his mistake, hurried back, and disappeared through the breach in the wall, thus revealing its weak point.

Bourbon quietly returned to his camp, stationed on the heights behind the Vatican. Thence he surveyed the coveted city—a city of heroic and pious memories—a city of prayer, with its colossal ruins, its thousand belfries. Rome was in his infernal power, a prey to his savage cohorts. They rushed madly forward, roaring like wild beasts. Bourbon was at their head, and gave the signal for assault. He himself would place the first scaling-ladder. Strange fatality! Place it he might, but he was not to mount it; his part is played out—a shot from a common arquebus puts an end to his chequered career.

It is well known that Benvenuto Cellini claimed the honour of having fired this fatal shot. In his memoirs he relates that on learning the approach of the enemy to the gates of Rome, ‘I started with Alessandro and two trusty comrades to the Campo Santo—from the walls of which we could descry this strange army on the point of effecting its entry. There was an active engagement at the foot of the wall on which we were standing. A thick cloud of dust arose. I observed to Alessandro :

“Let us go back home. You see, we can do no good here; the enemy advances, and our people are running away.”

Alessandro in affright replied : “Would to God we had never come here!” and turned on his heel and scampered away as fast as he could.

‘I reproached him for such cowardice, and said : “ Since we are here, before we go away let us do something worthy of men.” Whereupon, pointing my arquebus towards a group of soldiers more dense and numerous than the others, I took aim at the tallest of them. The cloud of dust was so intense that I could not discern whether he was on horseback or on foot. Afterwards I turned to Alessandro and Picchino, told them to fire, and showed them how to avoid the besiegers’ arquebusades. Each of them having fired twice, I looked over the wall cautiously, and saw that the enemy were in great tumult : one of our balls had killed Bourbon—we learnt afterwards he was the tallest man among them. We left this gate and went by the Campo Santo of St. Peter, behind the Church of St. Angelo—it was with exceeding difficulty that we gained the Castle gateway, the guardians of the ramparts firing on those who retreated, and some of the foe, who had now penetrated into the city, pursued us. The Castle guard consented to lower the portcullis, and finally all four of us were admitted. Just as I was mounting the bastion, Pope Clement entered the fortress by the galleries. He would not leave the Vatican sooner, as he could not believe it possible that the enemy would enter the city.’

When Bourbon fell, Philibert de Châlon, Prince of Orange, who was at his side, had his body covered

instantly, lest the soldiers should falter on seeing their leader killed. They continued, however, their sacrilegious course, and in a few hours were masters of the town.

‘The sack of Rome,’ says Brantôme, ‘was so terrible, that neither before nor since has anything been seen like it. The soldiers pillaged, murdered, committed every act of brutal violence, without respect of age or sex or dignity. They spared neither nuns nor virgins, and even exercised their rage on antique statues and other marbles.’

Paradin corroborates Brantôme’s statement. ‘The Spaniards and Germans were cruelly bent on pillage, they plundered and destroyed every building, and violated women, especially the nuns. Never had there been such calamity, misery, damage, cruelty and inhumanity witnessed. In the space of a fortnight eight thousand Romans perished. Rome was like hell with the clamours, the cries, and the groans of the victims.’

The infuriated soldiers were determined to prove their devotion to their chief by obeying no other. Their despair at his loss baffled description. They bore his corpse to a chapel with marks of veneration worthy of a saint, relieving guard day and night. On leaving Rome they carried it away to Gaeta, where they placed it in the Castle—an impregnable fortress—and there they erected a noble monument

to his memory and to that of Suzanne his wife. Brantôme says : ‘ The first time I went to Naples, on my return thence, I passed by Gaeta with M. de Quélus. We went to the Castle in the morning and inquired if, as French nobles, we should be allowed to visit the tomb of M. de Bourbon. The sentinel said he would mention our request to the governor, who soon made his appearance. He was exceedingly courteous, told me he had known my father, and at length confessed he was French, and an old servant of M. de Bourbon. He was about sixty years of age, remarkably polite, tall, neither too stout nor too thin. He showed us into the little chapel, which is on the left as you enter. He preceded us and offered us holy water ; then, kneeling in front of the altar, he begged us to say a Pater, an Ave and a De Profundis for the soul of his late master, with which request we naturally complied. When we rose from our knees he pointed out the tomb to us. This monument was placed high up, after the Italian fashion ; over it was thrown a magnificent drapery of cloth of gold, on which were the Duke’s armorial bearings. I noticed the absence of his orders, and asked why they were omitted.

“ ‘ The King,’ replied the governor, “ having called upon M. de Bourbon to give up his Constable’s sword and his badge, M. de Bourbon replied that, as for the sword, it had been taken from him on the

journey to Valenciennes, when the command of the vanguard was given to M. d'Alençon ; the badge he had left behind the head of his bed at Chantelle. And," the governor added, "he would never accept the Golden Fleece from the Emperor." Continuing his discourse, he said : " There lies the body of the bravest and most valiant prince that ever was born, not excepting the Nine Champions, for he surpassed them all." And he went on relating the Duke's deeds of valour until we left the chapel, when he gave us two soldiers to take us round the Castle, which we inspected at our leisure. On our return he received us in a hall on the ground-floor, where a fine breakfast, with excellent viands and exquisite fruits, especially pomegranates, awaited us. When we took our leave, the good governor offered his services, more especially to me, and we bade him farewell.'

CHAPTER IX.

THE PEACE OF CAMBRAI—QUEEN ELÉANOR—DEATH
OF LOUISE OF SAVOY.

CHRISTENDOM was horror-stricken at the Pope's captivity and the sack of Rome. Charles V. tried in vain to exculpate himself. The sacred city was in the hands of his soldiers, he was held responsible for its desecration. Francis I. seized the opportunity thus offered. With the help of Henry VIII., who promised a subsidy of thirty thousand crowns a month, Francis was able to raise an army of forty thousand men, and, in concert with Henry, purposed to deliver the Pope from thraldom.

Lautrec, named commander-in-chief of the force, crossed the Alps in October, 1527. He encountered no obstacle on his march through Italy, but on nearing Rome he learnt that the Pope had effected his escape on the 9th November, whereupon he established the Duke of Urbino at Orvieto, and continued his own march to Naples.

The Prince of Orange thereupon withdrew in all haste with the remains of the Imperial troops from Rome, in order to effect a junction into Don Hugues de Moncade at Naples. Lautrec allowed them to pass unmolested, and to establish themselves in Naples, and on the 1st of May he encamped before that city without even attempting to besiege it. He was calculating on the rich ransom to be won from the princes who had taken refuge there, forgetful of the torrid heat of summer, the stagnant water, the filthy state of the camp, engendering putrid fever. Pestilence speedily attacked them with such mortality that in less than three months the army was utterly destroyed ; princes, nobles, captains, soldiers, and Lautrec himself, being carried off by it.

In the north, Antoine de Leyves defeated and took François de Bourbon, Count of St. Pol, prisoner, and the list of disasters was completed by the desertion of André Doria at sea. Nothing could be more fatal to French interests than the Admiral's defection. France at that time had no regularly organized royal marine service. Philip Augustus, the first of the Capetians, had brought together a fleet, composed of seventeen hundred sailing ships, but they were poor vessels at the best ; the Count of Flanders captured three hundred of them, sank another hundred, and blockaded the rest in the port of Dam, where the King had them burnt to avoid

their being seized. St. Louis had a better fleet, with which he ravaged the coast of Poitou, conquered the kingdom of Naples, and twice crossed to Africa with his army; but under his successors this element of national strength and defence was allowed to decay. For all distant expeditions, or for the transport of troops, recourse was had to home or foreign merchant vessels and galleys, indifferently armed with guns on deck or at the prow. The King built only one such state vessel, the *Cordelière*, constructed at the Queen Anne's expense, and had the *Carraquon* built for Francis I. Du Bellay relates, as a wonderful feat in the expedition of 1545, that two fleets of a hundred ships each fired three hundred shots on either side during a cannonade which lasted two hours. True, from the reign of Charles le Bel, every maritime province had its admiralty, the governor of each province acting as admiral, but the office implied no knowledge of naval matters. Francis I. had consequently been forced to hire ships from the Genoese merchants, and had incorporated them with the existing French fleets. André Doria, reputed the most able sea-captain of his day, was appointed to the command. Francis, hot-tempered, and with the thoughtlessness which so often characterized his politics, irritated Doria by his haughty treatment, and the appointment of a mere courtier like Barbézieux to the com-

mand of the French fleet off Genoa caused Doria's cup of wrath to overflow. At the close of his engagement he threw up his command and joined the Emperor. France had no longer either a strip of territory or a single soldier in Italy.

Nor was Charles V. in much better plight. Continual feuds arose from the antagonism of different races in his wide empire. The religious revolution in Germany was a source of endless trouble, and to crown all the Turks were at the gates of Vienna. In a situation so critical for both countries it was absurd for the two sovereigns to bandy insults and puerile challenges. National quarrels could not be settled by single-handed combats, and both Governments were so impoverished that war was an impossibility. Louise of Savoy and Marguerite of Austria were called on to arbitrate the conditions of peace. The Princesses met at Cambrai on the 7th of July, 1529, took up their abode in contiguous houses, and for their greater convenience a door of communication was made in the wall. In less than a month these two ladies drew up a treaty of peace, known as the Ladies' Treaty, or the Cambrai Treaty, in all points analogous to the Madrid Treaty, save that Burgundy remained a French province, and the young hostages were restored to their country on paying two million gold crowns as ransom. The hardest condition for Francis was having to abandon his

allies, Robert de la Marck and the Count d'Egmont in the north, and the Italian states in the south ; even Florence, so long friendly to France, and the Duke of Ferrara, whose son Hercules was married to Renée of France, all were made over to the Emperor, whose hands were so full with the threatened Turkish invasion that he contented himself with establishing his supremacy, and left the country unmolested. Pope Clement VII.'s possessions were guaranteed to him. The Duke of Ferrara still retained his own territory, though deserted by the Pope, who would gladly have seen him ejected. The Venetians were merely to restore the places they had taken ; the Sforzas were re-established in the duchy of Milan ; and the Angevin barons of the kingdom of Naples were the only exceptions to this conciliatory arrangement. Charles V. gave them over to the tender mercies of his new Viceroy, the Prince of Orange, who confiscated their lands, and beheaded those who were not fortunate enough to escape to France.

Florence held out longer. Charles V. was disposed to reinstate the inhabitants in the enjoyment of their old institutions, but Clement VII. could not forget nor forgive the driving away of his family. He consequently persuaded the Emperor to besiege the fair city with the remains of the army that had sacked Rome, headed by the Prince of

Orange, who was killed during the ten months' struggle made famous by Michael Angelo's defence on the 1st August, 1530. At length Florence surrendered, and Alexander de Medicis, son of the bastard Julian, took possession under the patronage of Charles V. All the time-honoured liberties and privileges of its citizens were declared null and void.

With the respite from war France began to recover. The heavy ransom for the young princes was, however, a terrible tax on its finances, and took a year to levy. After the rupture of the treaty of Madrid, the princes (one of them being eight, the other nine years of age) had been withdrawn from the care of Madame Eleanor, and sent to Valladolid, in Old Castile. Their French personal attendants were dismissed and sent to the galleys, and the poor boys were condemned to pass three years of the springtide of life in prison. Charles V. was incapable of pity.

The King and his sister, in cruel anxiety about them, despatched a confidential person named Bodin to visit them. Bodin chronicled the accidents of his journey. First he was detained twenty-three days at Narbonne waiting for a pass from the Emperor, who was at Barcelona. When he had obtained the pass he took post-horses, but at the frontier he was put under arrest and taken to Perpignan, where he was kept four days, strictly guarded. At length he

reached Barcelona; there, again, he passed eight days without being allowed to proceed. At Saragossa the customs officer took an inventory of all his belongings, and obliged him to pay duty, though his pass franked him. He then reached Pedrasso, where the princes were detained. Another delay awaited him before entering the town, and he was conducted to a hostelry under the guard of ten soldiers. The next day he was presented to the Marquis of Verlana, governor of the fortress, who led him to the Princes, whom he found in a dark room, with bare walls. The little captives were seated on stone seats near the window, which was guarded by a double iron grating so high up that they could not enjoy either air or light. They were wretchedly clad in a sort of riding costume, without ribbons or ornaments of any kind. Bodin could not refrain from tears at the sad spectacle, but on recovering his emotion, he bowed low to the Dauphin, apprising him in French that the King, the Duchess of Angoulême, and the Queen of Navarre had commissioned him to visit them and assure them they would soon be set free.

The Dauphin turned to the governor and said, in Spanish, he had not understood a word the messenger had spoken.

Bodin, in amazement, asks him in Spanish if he has forgotten French.

‘How could I remember it,’ the Prince replied, ‘as I have none of my attendants with whom I could converse?’

The Duke of Orleans stepped forward on this, and said :

‘Sir—my brother—this is the Usher Bodin.’

At this both the Princes besieged him with questions, the governor showing them into another room, more wretchedly bare than the first, but with accessible windows, to which the Princes ran, each with a dog in his arms, delighted to inhale a breath of fresh air, and to enjoy a ray of sunlight. ‘Poor pleasure for Princes,’ observed the gaolers as they passed.

Antony van Praet suggested that the King should send an artist to them, as the Dauphin seemed to have talent, and spent his days in modelling little wax figures. Bodin replied that they would find other occupations in less than three months; but the Marquis retorted that neither in three nor in four months would they have left Spain, and thereupon signified that the interview had lasted long enough.

It was with difficulty Bodin was allowed to return the next day. He brought two velvet caps with gold ornaments surmounted with a white ostrich feather, and was about to put them on the Princes’ heads when van Praet took them from him, and

would not even suffer him to measure the height of the captives, lest by any magic art these details should endow them with the power of escaping.

During the few days of Bodin's stay at Pedrasse he was forbidden to walk about the town, or to prolong his sojourn. On mounting his horse at his departure, he found the poor animal had been stabbed in the shoulder for the purpose of disabling him for the journey, as one of the guards had taken a fancy to him ; but Bodin rode off on the wounded steed, and was escorted to the frontier by a strong guard.

He made his report on his return to Francis, who transmitted it to Marguerite of Austria, conjuring her to entreat the Emperor to ameliorate the condition of his sons, and to give them back their attendants. Marguerite at once wrote to Charles V. : ‘Your Majesty, God has graciously given you fine children, so you are better able to judge of the paternal tenderness and regrets of the King. I beseech you, out of friendship to him, to grant his request.’

What attention Charles V. paid to Marguerite's prayer is not recorded, but the Princes were only restored to liberty, and given in charge to Madame Eleanor (Francis's betrothed), a year afterwards, on full payment of the ransom.

Queen Eleanor was born at Louvain in 1498 ;

she was consequently thirty-three in 1531, a thorough German, with a kindly disposition ; she was fairly intelligent, but somewhat romantic. The Prince Palatine Frederic, who resided at the Court of Louvain, where Marguerite was brought up, fell passionately in love with her when she was sixteen. Marguerite's heart responded to the tender sentiment. An exchange of letters was made. Charles V., informed of the secret understanding, was furious, and forbade his sister to see the Prince. Shortly after this episode he married her to Emmanuel, King of Portugal, who was old, infirm, and humpbacked. The Princess resisted as long as she could, but her brother, having one day surprised a love-letter from the Prince Palatine in Marguerite's bodice, banished the offender, and was so violent that at last his sister consented, and became Queen of Portugal in 1519. A son and daughter were born of this incongruous alliance. At twenty-three years of age Marguerite became a widow, and withdrew to her brother's court. The faithful Palatine continued to send a secret ambassador to the Dowager Queen. Huber Thomas of Liège was the bearer of urgent letters recalling their mutual affection in the past, and renewing his suit. Circumstances were changed, and with them Marguerite's heart. Queen Claude had just died, and already an alliance was mooted with Francis I.,

whose prestige was great. The young widow, in short, was fascinated by it, and she rejected the Palatine's offer.

It is said that in 1538 the Palatine came to the French court to see Marguerite, whom he reminded of the happy past, of his hopes, and her avowals. The Queen treated it all as a childish caprice, but not so the Palatine.

Eleanor, to judge from her portrait, had strongly-marked features and the Austrian lip. Nevertheless, Thomas of Liège affirms that she was handsome, had a fine skin, dark-arched eyebrows, a bright complexion, coral lips, small pearl-white teeth, eyes always lighted up with smiles, and an expression of modest gaiety.

Just when the date fixed for the return of the Princes—a moment so impatiently hoped for—arrived, a fraud committed by the Chancellor Duprat on the coin in which the ransom was to be paid was discovered by the Spaniards, and occasioned a delay in the Queen's journey. Forty thousand crowns wanting through Duprat's dishonest coinage had to be made good, but the exchange at last took place on the 1st July, 1530, on the Bidassoa, precisely at the same spot where Francis had been set at liberty.

On the Spanish side of the stream were the Queen of Portugal and the King's sons, accompanied by the

Constable of Castile. On the French, Montmorency, with his suite, and the commissioners in charge of the ransom. In the middle of the river a boat was stationed, occupied by a French and Spanish gentleman, whose duty it was to verify the treasure. This done, each gave a signal to his respective countrymen, the two groups of whom embarked in small boats, and the exchange was concluded. ‘This being done, Montpezat was instantly despatched,’ says Du Bellay, ‘to announce the good tidings to the King at Bordeaux. You can easily imagine the royal father’s delight.’

Hugues Marmier gives a curious account of the meeting between Francis and Eleanor in a letter addressed to Charles V., dated 13th July:

‘As soon as the Queen had set foot on French soil, she was surrounded by the nobles, who paid her the respect and deference due to a sovereign. She then entered a litter, the two Princes with her, and they arrived at St. Jean de Luz at ten o’clock at night. The next day they reached Bayonne, and later on Mont-de-Marsan, passing through the estates of M. d’Albret, who came in person to meet the Queen. At Mont-de-Marsan Eleanor was informed that the King would join her, with a small retinue, in the chapel of a convent called Veyrières, almost four leagues distant. The Queen lost no time in obeying the summons, and arrived at the convent

at nine in the evening. The Lord Chamberlain came a short way on the road to escort her, and to say that the King would arrive at eleven. The Bishop of Lisieux, his chief almoner, had already arrived to celebrate mass. The Queen was ushered into the apartment prepared for her, followed by her ladies, by the Lord Chamberlain and the Spanish ambassadors. But few minutes elapsed when the King arrived, followed by the Cardinal de Lorraine, de Brion, de Boissy, and a few other gentlemen. Francis stepped forward as the Lord Chamberlain advanced leading Eleanor, and saluted her as became a gallant knight in welcoming the lady of his love, conducting his bride to her room, where, seated side by side on the bed, they chatted and laughed together. At midnight mass was celebrated, and the marriage consecrated by the chaplain, after which the royal couple retired. They were to continue their journey the following day. Queen Eleanor was delighted with her lot. Francis was both amiable and amusing.'

Marmier, in a letter to the Emperor, chronicles the satisfaction of the bride, who was specially delighted with the assurances and protestations of friendship and goodwill made by the King towards her brother. Nothing was wanting to complete her happiness; she was sovereign of the first court in Europe, and would be the bond of peace and unity

between her husband and her brother. She was greeted everywhere in France with enthusiasm. Had she not restored the Princes to their father and their country? Moreover, the two youths were devoted to her. She was also a pledge of peace to a nation weary of war. The various towns through which she passed vied with each other in festive demonstrations of joy, the streets and châteaux were gaily decorated ; mummers displayed their talents in plays of all kinds, amongst which was a pastoral composed by Madame Marguerite. At Bayonne the actors were arrayed in white taffetas, each costume costing fifty livres *tournois*.

Between Lanon and Bordeaux the King and Queen descended the river in a covered boat magnificently gilded, with painted glass windows, equal in beauty to those of Henry VIII.'s tent at Ardres.

At Bordeaux all the guilds figured in the rejoicings, the royal procession being headed by that of the dressmakers bearing a flag with a white cross and four fleurs-de-lis on a black silk ground ; scissors, ornamented with black and white ribbons, hung from the staff. The other corporations followed, each distinguished by appropriate insignia of their trade.

Paris outdid all other cities at the entry of the royal pair ; the procession was composed of members of every possible function, profession, and trade,

supplemented by the masters of the Mysteries of the Passion and the Holy Trinity, of the Church of the Holy Innocents, by Master Jehan of the Pont Alaix, and by Messire Mathé and his companions. All citizens were enjoined to appear in gala costumes to do honour to the Queen.

At the State banquet Madame Eleanor was presented with two finely chased silver chandeliers, six feet high, of pyramidal form, ornamented with cornucopiæ, filled with figures bearing mottoes in praise of the Queen, and assurances of the devotion of the Parisians to her sacred person.

Marguerite, Francis' sister — whose pastorals formed a striking feature of the pageant—was, however, absent. A great event had taken place in her life.

At the King's liberation several brilliant marriages had been talked of for her, first Charles V., then Henry VIII., but neither project was realized ; so Francis (it is difficult to imagine why) gave his sister to Henri d'Albret, King of Navarre, whose position was far from brilliant. In his youth, under Lesparre, he had been defeated by the Spaniards in his attempt to conquer Spanish Navarre. He nevertheless continued in the army, was taken prisoner at Pavia, and strictly guarded in the citadel, from which, however, he effected his escape by means of a rope ladder, procured by one of his chamberlains

—Francis de Rochefort. Halfway down his heart failed him, and but for Rochefort's threat to cut the cords he would have returned to his prison. However, he reached the ground in safety, found a horse awaiting him, and he and Rochefort galloped off.

Henri d'Albret was a burly, handsome man, but unintelligent and ignorant. His portrait on wood, in the north attic of the Versailles gallery, represents him with a dull expression, but good and regular features. He was nine years younger than Marguerite, and probably was more alive to the disparity of age than to her superiority of mind. But she was the King's sister, and he still nurtured hopes of recovering Spanish Navarre.

As for Marguerite, her devotion to her brother made her ready to accept anyone he approved of, so she was married on the 24th January, 1527. Some time previous to the event she wrote to her cousin, Madame de la Rochefoucauld: ‘Our marriage is as yet too uncertain for me to venture to send invitations to my relations.’ A month or two after she announces to Montmorency that she has reason to be satisfied with her married life.

By the marriage contract Francis gave up his pretensions to the countship of Armagnac in favour of Henri, and promised to obtain for him the restitution of Spanish Navarre. Later on, he gave the

province of Berry as an appanage to his sister, and gave to his brother-in-law the governorship of Guyenne.

Jeanne d'Albret was born a year after the marriage. Marguerite was about to have a son (who only survived five months and a half) just as her nephews returned to France, and in writing to Montmorency she expressed her deep regret that she should be unavoidably absent at such a time.

The two ladies who negotiated the Cambrai Treaty did not long survive it. Marguerite of Austria had died at Malines on the 30th November, 1530, and Louise of Savoy died the following year on the 25th September, 1531. Her health had long been precarious, and caused great anxiety to her daughter, who, in the autumn of 1531, wrote to her brother acquainting him of their mother's illness. 'But now she is better, thanks to her three little doctors' (her grandsons), 'who make her forget her pain. It is not possible to be better or more loving than they are, only they are so sorry you have left. M. d'Angoulême (the youngest) declares that if once he gets you here again he will not let go of you; he will hold your hand even when you hunt the wild boar, as you will shield him from being hurt. You may suppose, sire, that madame did not listen without emotion to these childlike remarks.'

She wept, and seemed better for her tears—as the distich says :

“ Qui pleure larmes par amour
N'en sent mal ni douleur.”

(‘*He whose tears for love do flow
Feeleth neither pain nor woe.*’)

Shortly after she writes again :

‘Sire, I cannot tell you how sad and sorry we are here now, for madame (who in your absence is our chief delight) causes us great anxiety. However much she may struggle to conceal her sufferings, she is nevertheless so much altered that I have never seen her so. Her amusement after dinner is to send for people who have sore legs or arms, that she may dress their wounds with a remarkable ointment she has. I do entreat you, for her health and comfort’s sake, take her away from this place ; do not leave her here without you. Send for her, with some of her suite ; the rest might remain with your children, whom I would serve.’

In the meantime a fearful epidemic declared itself in the Ile-de-France ; and the whole of the royal family prepared to leave. Marguerite wrote to Montmorency :

‘Madame is so weak she will scarcely be able to bear the fatigue of the journey ; but the danger is imminent, and the doctors insist on my not writing

either to the King, the Queen, or you, for fear of spreading the infection.'

The young Princes were the first to leave.

Marguerite continued her correspondence with Montmorency :

' We are still here. Madame nearly fainted away yesterday from sheer weakness.'

Her dread of the contagion gave her strength to leave in a litter with her daughter, and they set out for Romorantin. Louise, however, grew so rapidly worse that they were obliged to stop at Grez, in Gatinois, whence Marguerite despatched a letter to her brother :

' Madame's illness varies so much, at times she seems dying—at times improving. I did not venture to write to you till I saw the results of the change of air, which she was convinced would be beneficial to her. To be candid with you, as I know you like to trust my word, I see no improvement. On Saturday she bore the motion of the litter without complaining. To-day I find her very weak—weaker than ever. Her voice is feeble, her breathing short, and she speaks so sadly—I cannot bear to hear her. Sometimes she gives way to this painful kind of discourse, sometimes not; but I see her losing strength daily. I will keep you advised of anything that may occur.'

The day but one after the above letter was written,

Louise was no more—she died at fifty years of age. In the last years of her life she became intolerant on religious matters, probably in the hope of thus retrieving her past impatience of control. Up to her last, however, she was full of energy and obstinacy, and continued to support her creature, Duprat, and to excite her son to acts of despotic authority. On opening her coffers, fifteen hundred thousand gold crowns were found in it, secretly accumulated by her grasping hands. Francis I. was taken by surprise; he had never been so rich before. He applied this treasure in paying what was owing of his ransom, in redeeming the towns of the Somme, held by Charles V., and in reorganizing his army.

CHAPTER X.

THE COURT OF FRANCIS I.—THE COMTESSE DE CHATEAUBRIAND—THE DUCHESSE D'ETAMPES—THE QUEEN OF NAVARRE AND THE POETS.

ANNE OF BRITTANY, as we have seen, took the initiative of forming a Court, with its chamberlains, ladies, and its guard-of-honour, composed of one hundred Bretons. Up to her time, the Kings of France had lived as feudal lords, with their men-at-arms, and the women were all but cloistered. Anne could introduce this innovation with more propriety than anyone. She was a Duchess in her own right, and never allowed this feudal title to be effaced by her husband's royal rank. Her strength of will and the purity of her life, moreover, gave her great ascendancy over both Charles VIII. and Louis XII. It must be owned that her Court had rather the style of a school. The gentlemen and ladies of it lived apart. Brantôme observes : ‘As to the ladies, Queen Anne began by having them about her, but the King did not care to see them with her.’

In the following reign a great change took place. Poor Queen Claude was almost a cipher. Louise, all powerful by her son's devotion, constituted a Court according to her own fancy. Francis was only twenty. A series of uninterrupted pleasures was inaugurated at Court. The presence of ladies was indispensable in these fêtes. Brantôme, in his quaint language, writes : ‘ Considering that the chief ornaments of a Court are the ladies, the King was intent on filling his with ladies of birth and young ladies of fair reputation, who appeared there like celestial goddesses. If perchance some favoured their lovers or knights (I say some), how could the King take it amiss, seeing he never had recourse to violence, and allowed each to defend his own garrison ? Instead of receiving such a select company of ladies, would it have been better to follow the example and errors of preceding reigns, when Kings admitted to their retinue women of notoriously bad character under charge of an individual, whose title indicated his ignoble office, and whose duty it was to provide lodgings for these women ? As for me, I am of opinion that there never was a better change than that of introducing real ladies to Court. How often have I witnessed our Kings going about the country without a single lady of the Court ! We were all shocked and annoyed—a week seemed a year to us. In time of war, what trophy

is so agreeable to a man as a favour from his mistress ! Women can inspire men with more deeds of valour than even their swords. In short, a Court without women is no Court at all.'

Francis was in the first exuberance of youth ; his mother adored him, and wished to keep him near him. Herself of easy morals, she chose for her surroundings the most seductive ladies, and broke down the barriers of etiquette that existed between the two sexes. From this time forward men and women are found in continual contact. In Court life the ease and liberty they enjoyed were anything but displeasing to them. Women had not only their appointed place in all Court ceremonies, festivities, hunts, sports, and journeys, they also took part in politics, literature, and had a voice in all matters, grave or gay. Francis appreciated their qualities of heart and intellect, their spontaneity, grace, delicacy, and refinement. He encouraged them to cultivate their natural gifts, enjoyed their conversation, and gave them a generous part of his thoughts, feelings, occupations, and life. His gallantry was not of the vulgar type. Female beauty had its artistic, noble interpretation for him. Chivalry had bequeathed to him that fair flower of respect which, even in the midst of excesses, preserves the ideal.

Brantôme assures us that he never allowed women to be slandered in his presence ; he desired

that they should be treated with honour and respect. One day, hearing an esquire speak lightly of the fair sex, he flew into a passion, and ordered his archers to seize the offender and hang him, then and there. Fortunately, however, the calumniator made his escape. The next day Francis's anger was appeased, and he granted a free pardon to the culprit.

The two women who had the greatest influence during the gay monarch's reign were the Comtesse de Chateaubriand and the Duchesse d'Etampes. Françoise de Foix, cousin of Gaston and Germaine, sister of Lautrec, Lescun, and Lesparre, had been maid-of-honour to Anne of Brittany, who married her, with a dower of 20,000 francs, to Jean de Laval-Montmorency, lord of Chateaubriand, a most noble, wealthy, but dull-witted, bad-tempered man. When Francis came to the throne, the young Countess was in the first radiance of her beauty, which immediately dazzled the King. He distinguished her among the ladies of his mother's Court; in short, fell passionately in love with her, and told her of his flame after his own fashion, which was said to be irresistible. How long the Countess withstood the amorous siege matters little. She at last surrendered. At the baptism of the Dauphin, on the 25th August, 1518, her position at Court was proclaimed, the King giving her rank immediately after the royal

Princesses. Henceforward Francis was under the spell of her charm, and the whole Court was at her feet.

This was scarcely what Louise had anticipated. Henceforth she had a rival. The mother and the mistress strove to outwit each other in influence, and we have seen the fatal effects of this rivalry in Italy. The Comtesse de Chateaubriand reigned pre-eminent in Francis's heart, who for ten years was constant, if not faithful. But at length the once ardent flame died out. The disastrous campaign in Italy and his long imprisonment effected a moral revolution in Francis—swept away, so to speak, his past life. In the first hour of regained freedom, when he galloped forward to embrace his mother and greet the assembled Court, Madame de Chateaubriand was present, but no echo of past love thrilled through Francis's heart—he scarcely noticed the Countess. Louise triumphed. She was avenged by this disdainful indifference of her son to his former mistress.

Among the Regent's suite, composed of the flower of noble ladies, was a young beauty of sweet eighteen, Anne de Pisseleu, otherwise Mademoiselle d'Heilly, exceptionally bright and intelligent. She was called, ‘*La plus belle des savantes et la plus savante des belles.*’

Marot sang her praises as follows :

‘Dix-huit ans je vous donne,
Belle et bonne,
Mais à votre sens rassis
Trente-cinq et trente-six
J’en ordonne.’

To Mademoiselle d’Heilly it was given to fan the embers of Francis’s sensibility into a new and ardent flame ; so rapidly, too, was his passion reciprocated by the lady, that in a brief space she became Duchesse d’Etampes, and was loaded with favours.

There are conflicting statements as to what passed between the Comtesse de Chateaubriand, her one time lover, and her actual rival. According to some, Francis treated her brutally, took away the jewels he had given her, to transfer them to his new mistress, and delivered the discarded mistress to her husband, who, it is said, treated her so cruelly that she died. In contradiction of this fable, Brantôme relates the story of the jewels and Francis’s visit to Chateaubriand after the incorporation of Brittany with France. In the heyday of his passion for Madame de Chateaubriand, the jewels he gave her bore tender mottoes, to which Marguerite had helped to give a turn of wit and grace. The jewels on which the mottoes were engraved were, at the same time, artistic gems.

Mademoiselle d’Heilly, jealous of Francis’s past, was clamorous for these expressions of love

addressed to another. Francis yielded to her oft-repeated prayer, and demanded restitution of the gifts. When the messenger charged with this order arrived, Madame de Chateaubriand replied that she was ill, but that he might return in three days.

As soon as he had left, Madame de Chateaubriand sent for a goldsmith, and ordered him to melt down the jewels, and on the messenger's return she handed to him the simple ingots.

'Go,' she said; 'carry them to the King. Since it is his pleasure to take away what he gave, I restore his gifts in ingots. As to the mottoes, they are deeply engraved in my thoughts. I cherish them too dearly to suffer that anyone else should appropriate or find pleasure in them.'

When the message was delivered to the King, he merely remarked :

'Take all back to her. I did not value them for their intrinsic worth, but for the mottoes. I would willingly have given her double; but since she has destroyed the mottoes, I will not take the gold, but I send it back to her. She has given proof of more heart and generosity than I could have believed a woman capable of showing.'

This version exonerates Francis from the accusation of cold cruelty; nor would the woman capable of giving such a lesson to her faithless lover be one to

submit tamely to a worthless husband. M. de Chateaubriand's courage and sense of honour were not high enough to prevent his acceptance of the King's favours during his conjugal trials, and he contented himself with grumbling and growling, as he did throughout life. But he was not a man to take revenge ; and doubtless when the wife returned to her husband, she felt herself equal to the task of assuming her place. As a further corroboration of Brantôme's more favourable testimony, we know that in 1532 the King, on the annexation of the States of Brittany, was magnificently received by the Count and Countess of Chateaubriand, and before leaving them endowed the Countess with the broad lands of Rhuis and Lucinio. The Countess died in her husband's castle in 1537, at about forty years of age.

Madame d'Etampes's portrait on wood, No. 3,170, in the north attic of Versailles, does not give the impression of the beauty attributed to her by chroniclers. There is an expression of animation and wit, mitigated by a want of amenity in her face. Clever and intelligent she undeniably was. Her opposition to religious persecutions proved, too, a breadth of mind and conscience rare at that time. Her chief talent lay in her skill in entering into the tastes and feelings of the King, whom she captivated by a thousand artful ways, constantly

varying the charm of her society during the one-and-twenty years that this liaison lasted—in short, as long as Francis lived.

Madame d'Etampes attached herself to Marguerite, whose sisterly affection rendered her indulgent to her brother's foibles. The King and Queen of Navarre resided alternately at Pau and at the Court of Francis. He and his sister clung more closely to each other after Louise's death. Marguerite's love and solicitude compensated Francis for the loss of his mother. She became the confidante of his political and other affairs. Brantôme tells us she was an adept in conciliating foreign ambassadors by her pleasing manners and conversation, and knew how to surprise their secrets, thereby rendering good service to her brother. Indeed, the diplomatists always left her enchanted, and sent the most flattering accounts of her charms to their several Courts. Among others, Giustiniano, the Venetian, wrote : ‘The Queen of Navarre, the King's sister, is a person of rare talent and understanding ; she takes part in all State councils.’

Marguerite's fondness for learning induced her to cultivate the society of philosophers, of savants, and above all of poets. The most celebrated of these last was her page, Clément Marot, whose father, Jean Marot, of Normandy, had been secretary to the Queen Anne, and afterwards to

Louis XII., whom he accompanied to Genoa. Clément was born and educated at Cahors; he was not a credit to his university. He became a member of a troupe known under the name of ‘Les Enfants Sans Soucis,’ who played farces, or *soties*, before the public. He frequented the Courts of Justice, was a clerk, and afterwards was appointed page to the Lord of Villeroy, who carried him off to the wars, and then introduced him at Court. Francis, then a boy, was pleased by the gaiety, originality, and independent bearing of Clément. As soon as he became King he made him one of his pensioners, and, in 1519, appointed him page to his sister, attaching him at the same time to the military Court of the Duke d’Alençon, whom he followed to the wars in the North and in Italy. He was wounded at the battle of Pavia, and made prisoner at the King’s side, while his master the Duke fled. On recovering his liberty, he resumed his office of *valet de chambre* to Marguerite, to whom he was devoted. All his life long he extolled her virtues, her beauty, her grace, her genius. His devotion was purely platonic, whatever may have been said, and it never disturbed either the Duchesse d’Alençon or the Queen of Navarre. Marguerite’s temperament was totally different from her mother’s: imaginative, tender, graceful, refined, with now and then a taint of affectation, she understood as much about love as

she did about theology, although she loved to discuss the topic. ‘Cold feminine natures,’ it is said, ‘take pleasure in talking of love, just as chilly persons like to warm themselves.’ To be effusive on the subject is a sure proof of indifference in the young ; in the old it may be one of regret or remembrance. In the sixteenth century it was a man’s duty to declare himself in love with every woman he met. The height of social talent was to model the Court on Olympian morality. Women were nymphs, graces, goddesses. Marguerite was even more—she was the quintessence of all learning, all loveliness, all beauty, and all grace. According to Marot’s description :

‘ Ma maitresse est de si haute valeur
Qu’elle a le corps beau, droit chaste et pudique ;
Son cœur constant n’est, pour heur ou malheur
Jamais trop gai ni trop mélancolique ;
Elle a au chef un esprit angélique
Le plus subtil qui oncq aux cieux resta.
O grand merveille ! On peut voir par cela
Que je suis serf d’ung monstre fort étrange—
Monstre je dy, car pour tout vray, elle a
Corps feminin, cœur d’homme et teste d’ange.
* * * * *

Madame escript si hault et doucement
Que je m’estonne en voyant choses telles
Qu’on n’en reçoit plus d’ébahissement.
Puis quand je l’oy parler si saigement,
Et que je voy sa plume travailler
Je tourne bride et m’esbahis comment
On est si sot de s’en esmerveiller.’

From the first there was a cross-fire of wit and poetry between Marot and Marguerite. He styled her his spiritual sister. Marguerite instituted a game of forfeits, to be paid by ten verses. Marot, of course, lost, and here is a sample of his ransom :

‘Que plust à Dieu que ceux à qui je doy
Fussent contents de semblable monnoy !’

The Queen replied :

‘Si ceux à qui devez comme vous dites
 Vous congoissoient comme je vous congois,
Quitte seriez des dettes que vous feites
Le temps passé tant grandes que petites,
 En leur payant un dizain toute fois
Tel que le vôtre qui vault mieux mille fois
Que l'argent dû par vous en conscience,
 Car estimer on peult l'argent au poix,
Mais on ne peult et j'en donne ma voix
Assez priser votre belle science.’

Marot, in his turn, said :

‘Mes créanciers, qui de dizains n'ont cure,
 Ont lu le vôtre, et sur ce leur ay dit :
Sire Michel, Sire Bonaventure
 La Sœur du Roy a pour moy faict ce dit.
Lors, eux cuydant que fusse en grand crédit,
M'ont appellé *Monsieur* à cry et cor,
Et m'ha valu vostre autant qu'or :
 Car promis ont non seulement d'attendre,
Mais d'en prester (foi de marchant) encor,
Et j'ay promis (foi de Clément) d'en prendre.’

Where in all this was the celestial fire ?

Marot was not alone in this art of versifying. Saint Gelais, called ‘The French Ovid;’ Crétin, ‘The Sovereign Poet;’ Colin, Forestier, Jacques Bourgeois, and many others, whose names are lost to posterity, committed the same kind of poetical misdemeanours. Marguerite was considered their patroness, their sister muse. Their praise of her was as inexhaustible, as their poetical declarations were innocent. Dorat versifies her miraculous conception. Louise of Savoy, eating an oyster out of the very shell whence Venus sprang, swallowed a drop of divine dew in form of a pearl, which became ‘Marguerite.’ A divine pearl herself, M. de Lavaux implored her in rhyme to take compassion on his martyrdom, declaring that he was dying for love of her.

She answers him gaily :

‘Vous estes loin, quoique votre escript die
De ceste mort par trop d'affection,
Car Dieu mercy vous n'avez maladie
Monstrant ennuy, douleur ne passion ;
Mais si la mort souffrez par fiction,
Quand vous serez par amour trespassé
Je vous en dois la lamentation,
Et en la fin *requiescant in pace.*’

There is nothing in this spiritual pleasantry which can be construed into passion or license ; bad minds only could construe it differently. Bonnivet’s devo-

tion, related in covered terms by Marguerite in the fifty-eighth story of the ‘Heptaméron,’ is an example of this base interpretation. He was one of the handsomest men of the Court, and became enamoured of Marguerite. She listened and replied to him in her usual gay fashion, acting a sentimental part, which Bonnivet chose to take in earnest. He invited the King and Princesses and the Court to pay him a visit in his castle. The brilliant company arrived at night ; all retired to their respective apartments. Marguerite was aroused from sleep by a strange sound in her room. Bonnivet had introduced himself by a trap-door, and was actually at her bedside. Marguerite defended herself so valiantly that Bonnivet was obliged to remain in his room the next day, unwilling to show his scratched face to the company. Marguerite’s first impulse was to denounce the insult to her brother ; but the sober-minded Madame de Châtillon, who had brought her up, dissuaded her, remarking that it was prejudicial to a woman to have to defend herself, and that she would be accused of coquetry by ill-disposed persons. The disclosure of the adventure was only made after Bonnivet’s death. Marguerite abstained from condemning him, and, on the contrary, she says he was ‘so clever and so brave, that few, if any, surpassed him, as his glorious death proved.’ Pure-minded women in general are often the most indulgent. Another favourite game at

Court, of Marot's invention, was rhyming monosyllables. Bonaventure des Perriers excelled in them—he, too, was one of Marguerite's valets, and wrote short stories in imitation of those of his royal mistress. In No. 60 of his tales, he pictures a monk at table continually disturbed by useless questions, to which he replies between each mouthful :

' Quel habit portez-vous ?—Froc.
Combien êtes-vous de moines ?—Trop.
Quel pain mangez-vous ?—Bis.
Quel vin buvez-vous ?—Gris.
Quelle chair mangez-vous ?—Boeuf.
Combien avez-vous de novices ?—Neuf.
Que vous semble de ce vin ?—Bon.
Vous n'en buvez pas de tel ?—Non.
Et que mangez-vous les vendredis ?—Œufs.
Combien en avez-vous chacun ?—Deux.'

Oaths, anagrams, emblems, mottoes were the craze of the day. Every noble and prince must have a personal oath as well as a war-cry. Louis XI. swore by 'La Pâques Dieu;' Charles VIII. by 'Par le jour Dieu;' Louis XII., 'Que le Diable m'emporte,' an expression which remains popular to this day, possibly owing to the inventor's popularity. Francis I. swore 'Foi de gentilhomme.' The order of succession of these sovereigns is celebrated in the following doggerel :

' Quand "La Paques Dieu" décéda,
"Par le jour Dieu" lui succéda ;

“*Le Diable m’emporte*” s’en tint près,
“*Foi de gentilhomme*” vint après.’

Clément Marot made a clever anagram for Francis I. Merely by changing the V into U, he converted ‘Fránçois de Valois’ into ‘De façon suis royal.’ The Court was in ecstasy at this ingenious discovery. Emblems were equally in vogue. An artist of the period, Dell’ Abbate, a pupil of Primaticcio, represented the King holding in one hand the sword of Mars; in the other the caduceus of Mercury; on his breast the shield of Pallas; on his shoulder Cupid’s quiver, underneath which was Diana’s horn. Ronsard celebrated the painter’s idea as follows :

‘François en guerre est un Mars furieux,
En paix Minerve, et Diane à la chasse ;
A bien parler, Mercure copieux ;
A bien aimer vrai Amour, plein de grace.
O France heureuse ! honore donc la face
De ton grand Roi, qui surpasse nature
Car l’honorant—tu sers en même place
Minerve, Mars, Diane, Amour, Mercure.’

The fashion of supplementing emblems with mottoes was introduced into France from Italy. It appeared first under Charles VIII., at the time of his Neapolitan campaign. Louis XII. was the first king to adopt a motto and emblem—a hedgehog, under which was ‘Cominus et eminus’ (Far and near), said to be addressed to his enemies. Queen Claude’s

motto was ‘Candida candidus.’ Marguerite’s emblem was a marigold turned to the sun, symbolical of God; the motto, ‘Non inferiora secutus.’ Francis’s well-known salamander was accompanied with the words ‘Nutrisco et extinguo,’ the exact meaning of which has furnished topic for endless discussions. Brantôme tells us that Marguerite excelled all others in finding appropriate mottoes in French, Latin, or other languages, adding that many of her compositions were used in ornamenting beds and tapestries. These poetical amusements are peculiar to an epoch emerging from barbarism into civilization. Up to this period Latin, not always classical, had been the chief vehicle in writing. The learned, intent on copying ancient models, committed untold faults against good taste. They invented verses called ‘simple Leonines,’ ‘double Leonines,’ and ‘triple Leonines.’ Acrostics were the fashion, and only words beginning with the same letter were admissible in long poems. Francis I. and his sister were the first to cast off these childish rules. They both spoke and wrote Latin, but their chief delight was to use French in conversation and in their writings. Their example was followed by men of letters. It is true the French tongue was by no means perfect at that time. The construction of phrases was awkward, stiff, and difficult; it lisped and halted, and an effort at refinement and elegance became affectation. It abounded in strength

of expression and ingenious turns of wit, but wanted rules to guide it into easy currents of social eloquence. This perfecting was reserved for later times. Clearness, precision, ease and propriety of expression are the outcome of disorder and confusion, just as science is born of corrected errors. Francis and Marguerite contributed greatly to the development of the French language, and we should bear this in mind.

CHAPTER XI.

SCIENCE, ART, AND LITERATURE UNDER FRANCIS I.

THE six years of peace which followed the signing of the Treaty of Cambray were fertile in good results. France was prosperous, and the liberal arts were developed and protected under Francis, and lent lustre to his reign.

His taste for literature was innate. The first Hebrew-French grammar, by Tissot, published in France, was dedicated to the Prince when only fourteen years of age. About the same time, Baltasar Castiglione arrived in France, and showed the first part of his book, ‘The Courtier,’ called by the Italians the ‘Golden Book,’ to the young Duke of Valois. His just and intelligent comments surprised the author so much that he at once predicted he would be one day a shining light.

One of the most important creations of Francis’s reign was incontestably that of the Royal College,

known at the present time as the College of France, of which Budé was the principal promoter.

Budé, born in 1467, had long been celebrated as a classical and scientific scholar. His life was devoted to study and solitude. Francis was anxious to draw him from his seclusion, and to bring him to Paris. With this object, he offered him the posts of Master of the Court of Requests and Royal Librarian, until he could get him nominated Provost of the Merchants of the City of Paris.

Budé himself gave Francis the credit of the idea of founding the College of France; but Leo X. had already set the example by founding the College for young Greeks at Rome in 1517. A simple canon of Brussels had also already established a college for Hebrew, Greek and Latin in Lorraine. Francis conferred with the erudite Budé on the object he had in view, and the two together decided on carrying out the scheme.

Francis, full of enthusiasm and good intentions, allowed himself to be distracted by women and war. Budé armed himself with patience during these intervals, and calmly awaited the moment to draw the vagrant monarch back to the execution of the great plan, so long impeded by the disasters of Pavia and the captivity in Spain. With the return of peace the idea revived. The original design of the College was on an extensive scale. On the site

of the Tour de Nesle, now occupied by the Institut, accommodation for six hundred students and professors of every branch of learning was to be provided. An endowment of fifty thousand crowns was made for current expenses. The course of study extended over fourteen years.

The funds, however, proved insufficient for so large an undertaking. The King therefore decided to detach a portion of the University endowment, and to create chairs of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin oratory. Later on chairs of mathematics, medicine, and philosophy were added, and the practical outcome of this scheme was to establish the freedom of teaching, of which the University had hitherto had the monopoly.

In the Middle Ages there were in Paris schools attached to abbeys or to chapters, some of which were justly celebrated, such as those of St. Geneviève and St. Germain l'Auxerrois. The clergy were the learned and artistic class of that time; some of whom, taking the title of 'maîtres-maçons' (master-masons), assisted in the building of cathedrals. In 1050 the Archbishop of Lyons was the architect of a bridge on the Saone, and the Bishop of Auxerre set apart three prebends of his cathedral, for a painter, a glazier, and a goldsmith.

In 1200 Philip Augustus united all the schools of Paris in a single body, which became the University,

to which he granted special privileges, which were ratified and increased by his successors. The University of Paris comprised four faculties, viz.:—theology, civil and canon law, medicine, and arts. The faculties had the right of electing the rector, the Pope, however, retaining the supreme headship. His legate, Robert Courçon, Cardinal of St. Etienne, drew up the statutes in 1215, subjecting both professors and students to ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The University, at the very outset of its career, was regarded as the centre of science in Europe, and attained a wide celebrity; but as time went on it showed itself wanting in breadth and adaptability to the changes of the times. The mark of the Middle Ages was impressed upon its teaching. Every branch of knowledge and all the methods of instruction were directed towards theology, and in the course of time the University of Paris, taking advantage of its monopoly of teaching, became despotic.

Louis IX., though a saint, had a taste for learning and independence. He recognised this abuse of power in the Paris University, and gave its pride a blow by founding, in 1229, the University of Toulouse, thus depriving the elder of its claim to be the *fille unique des rois*.

Paris was still clinging to its antiquated systems; its narrowness and bigotry shackled all efforts of

independent thought, and the grossest ignorance prevailed under the guise of learning.

The jurisconsult Conrad Heresbach affirms that he heard a monk announce from the pulpit : ‘A new language, called Greek, has been found, against which strict precautions are requisite, as it propagates all kinds of heresies. A number of persons have already procured a work in that tongue called the “New Testament”—a book full of briars and vipers. As to Hebrew, all those who learn it turn Jews at once.’

These dense prejudices were about to be dissipated by the creation of the Royal College. Its professors were to be nominated by the King, regardless of University degrees. The College was to be the refuge of freethinkers of all countries. Such an innovation was reprobated by the pedants of the old school. A tempest of wrath and indignation greeted the enterprise. Duprat and Poyet opposed it on financial grounds ; the fanatics at Court joined the University in multiplying objections. The latter at length, finding its efforts of no avail, cited the new professors to the bar of Parliament, demanding that they should be subjected to its examinations and authority. Béda, syndic of the theological faculty, whom, later on, we shall find heads a religious persecution, was a leader in this contest, and in this curious trial we trace the germ

of the conflict between faith and science, between Church and State.

Béda pretended that religion would be lost if Greek and Hebrew were to be taught by others than theologians. Were not nearly all the Bibles brought from that heretical nest, Germany, or the Jews? The royal professors replied by their counsel, Guillaume de Marillac: 'We are not theologians, but grammarians and scholars. If you understand Greek and Hebrew, attend our classes and denounce our heresies; but if you do not understand these languages, why interfere with us?'

Parliament was puzzled what to do. Theology and Hebrew were dead letters to it. The King was in fits of laughter at its evident embarrassment. Finally it decided to wash its hands of the affair, leaving the disputants to settle it amongst themselves. Francis availed himself of the crisis to further his own plans, and to complete the discomfiture of his adversaries, nominated as royal printer of Hebrew and Latin classics, the man most detested by the learned doctors, Robert Estienne, the distinguished editor and typographer. Estienne came of a most learned family. Robert's father, Henri, founded the house in 1482; at his death, Robert at first was associated with his mother, and her father-in-law, Cimon Colins, founded a new business. At twenty-four he married Pérette, daughter

of Josse Bade, who was also a printer. Pérette was a worthy helpmate for her husband: she helped him with his translations, corresponded with erudite foreigners, received them at her house, in which the parents, the sisters, and printers spoke and wrote in Latin; even the servants had picked up certain expressions, from hearing no other language spoken.

Estienne lived in one of the narrowest and darkest streets of that part of Paris which is now known as the Quartier Latin. There Francis I. and his sister paid him frequent visits, and, despite the King's taste for luxury and elegance, he was delighted to find himself in this simple, busy household, and to take part in their learned conversation. Sometimes Estienne, absorbed by his work, would beg his Majesty to wait, and Francis waited as a matter of course.

Theologians naturally detested Estienne, his translations of Holy Writ having corrected their falsifications and misinterpretations, and exposed their ignorance or their insincerity.

His first translation of the Hebrew Bible appeared in 1532; it was denounced as sacrilegious, and its author as meriting the stake. During the King's absence his house was searched. Estienne sought safety in flight, but as soon as Francis returned the tables were turned, and Estienne was reinstated. Francis furthermore caused searches to be made

throughout Europe, in Greece and Asia, for old manuscripts. These Robert reproduced, the King superintending with great interest the beauty and perfection of type, destined as they were to enrich his magnificent library at Fontainebleau.

Francis was equally zealous in engaging the most erudite men of all nations for the prosperity and success of his College.

The three brothers Bellay, celebrated in the Church, in arms, and in diplomacy ; Guillaume Petit, Bishop of Troyes, and afterwards of Senlis, Francis's confessor ; Cop, his doctor, the friend of Lascaris and Erasmus, undertook to bring before him the men of the greatest learning, whether French or foreigners. Marguerite seconded her brother's reforms with untiring zeal ; she identified herself with his every thought and project, always willing and delighted to further his wishes. In this instance her bright amiable spirit was of considerable use in helping him to group the different celebrities, and to facilitate their intercourse with each other. Budé, too, was one of the King's mainstays in the enterprise from its commencement. He shared Francis's wish to place Erasmus at the head of the new college. Poncher, Bishop of Paris, was of the same opinion. He had made the acquaintance of Erasmus at Brussels, and ever after styled him 'The God of Eloquence, of Genius, and of Learning.'

Francis made the most tempting offers to Erasmus—the Treasurership of Tours, a bishopric—anything he liked to ask. Erasmus hesitated; Francis reiterated promises and entreaties. At length, under the advice of Cuthbert Tunstall, the British Ambassador at Brussels, and afterwards Bishop of London, Erasmus gave a definite refusal. Budé, exasperated, exclaimed :

‘Would to God the earth would open and swallow up these croaking ravens who are frightened at Erasmus’s greatness !’

The first professors of Hebrew in the Royal College were Guidacerio, of Calabria, and Paul Paradis, a Venetian Jew converted to Christianity, whilst Pierre Danes was the first professor of Greek. Tagliacarne of Sarzano was named tutor of the royal princes, and by his side Bruto wrote, at Fontainebleau, his ‘History of Florentine Liberty,’ destroyed by the Medicis.

Pierre du Chatel, the distinguished Hellenist, was Francis’s special favourite. He had corrected Erasmus’s works at Basle, had resided long in Italy, and was skilled, not only in book learning, but was also an acute observer of men and manners, and his brilliant conversation fascinated the King, who gave him the see of Tulle, until that of Mâcon fell vacant, and appointed him his reader, and to converse with him during meals.

These readings, which became the fashion, were followed by disquisitions on history, natural history, and literature. Du Chatel's opinions frequently differed from those of Francis, but he expressed his views with courageous independence. The courtiers became jealous of him, and were not long in finding a pretext for a cabal against the scholar, who dared to own a divergence of ideas from those of the Sovereign. Du Chatel was equal to the occasion, and held his own. His opponents then tried to supplant him by a certain M. Bigot, of scholastic repute. Previous to receiving the aspirant, Francis inquired of Du Chatel :

‘Who is this Bigot?’

‘A philosopher,’ was the answer, ‘who is a follower of Aristotle’s opinions.’

‘And what are these opinions?’

‘Sire, Aristotle preferred a Republic to a Monarchy !’

The effect of this was that Bigot was allowed to remain in Normandy, of which he was a native.

Notwithstanding the affairs of State and the pre-occupations of war, Francis found leisure for introducing this intellectual impetus in Court life. In his numerous sojourns in different castles, surrounded by his Court, his daily routine was everywhere the same. Brantôme tells us that the royal table was nothing less than a school, in which all matters were

discussed, war as much as science of all kinds. Hubert Thomas de Liège describes accompanying Francis some distance on his way from Le Havre :

‘We ascended the Seine as far as Rouen. It was customary to read to the King *en route*. At this time Thucydides was the chosen author. Francis had a French translation made of his works. The King and the learned men of his suite interpreted the author with such elegance that I will be d——d if ever a journey seemed so short, though we were on the river from morning to night.’

Francis’s love of art was not less than his interest in science or literature. Architecture, sculpture, and painting revived under his reign. The castles of St. Germain, Blois, Fontainebleau, Chambord, Follembray, Villers-Cotterets, Madrid, were created or transformed by him. His example was followed by the nobility. Chenonceau, Ecouen, Chantilly, Meudon, were built, and, though last, not least, the Louvre was begun.

The first Kings of France had occupied a palace to the west of the city, the gardens of which extended to the banks of the Seine. Afterwards St. Pol was the royal abode, and then Les Tournelles, to the east of the city, near the ramparts. Francis disliked this residence ; the Duchess d’Angoulême also objected to it for its insalubrity on account of the neighbouring sewer. The house of Nicolas de Neuville, lord

of Villeroy, on the site of the Tuileries, was purchased ; the Princess liked its situation near the river, Francis because he could thence see the Louvre. He therefore fixed upon it as his future abode. The Louvre was at that time a feudal donjon (built by Louis le Gros to serve as the manor-house of the fiefs belonging to the Crown). Philip Augustus added a large tower to it, in which the Crown vassals took the oath of allegiance. This heavy pile obstructed the view, and Francis gave orders to have it demolished. Soon afterwards the present building was commenced. The pavilion opposite the Pont des Arts was the first to be built and completed. French and Italian architects and artists were employed. Fra Giacomo, Vignole, Sebastiano Serlio, the pupil of Peruzzi, were colleagues of Nepveu, Lescot, Goujon, Pilon, Philibert Delorme, and others.

The schools of painting were more distinct. The French school of portraits known as that of Janet or Clouet is remarkable for its natural life and expression, which still render it the glory of French galleries. At the end of the fifteenth century, the first Janet had been painter-in-ordinary to the Duke of Burgundy. His son and his grandson, John and Francis Clouet, established themselves in France, and became first grooms-of-the-chamber, then painters-in-ordinary to the King. To Francis we owe the principal part of the portraits of the Valois

Court. They were often too modest to sign their works, and disdained no application, however humble, of their talent, like Holbein in England, often condescending to decorate flags and trophies. In the following reign the panels of the first royal coach, with the entwined emblems of Henri II. and Diane of Poictiers, were the work of Francis Clouet.

Francis I., whilst fostering French art, nevertheless invited Italian painters of the Roman and Florentine schools, then on the wane, to sojourn in France. Leo X. was no more, and his successors had other thoughts than the protection of the arts. Hence there arose a migration of artists to Fontainebleau. Rosso, painter, architect, poet, and musician was made canon of the Sainte Chapelle to insure him a means of subsistence, and, as Maître Roux, became superintendent of the royal palaces. It was he who planned the great gallery of Fontainebleau, decorating it with paintings commemorative of the principal victories of Francis. Unfortunately he was irascible and susceptible, and in constant disagreement with his companions.

Primaticcio came twice to Fontainebleau. On his first visit he and Rosso disagreed, and Primaticcio withdrew; but on his return after Rosso's death he revenged himself by destroying some of the latter's works. He, however, brought the King numerous treasures from Italy, including a hundred and twenty-

five antique statues, a number of busts, and casts of Trajan's Column, the Laocoön, the Venus de Medicis, the Cleopatra, and other famous statues, which were cast in bronze, and placed at Fontainebleau. Vignola made a plaster cast of the horse of Marcus Aurelius, which was placed in the great castle court, whence it was called the *Cour du Cheval Blanc*. The Château of Meudon was also built, after Primaticcio's designs, for the Cardinal of Lorraine.

Andrea del Sarto, invited to paint the Dauphin's portrait, was less faithful. Francis having entrusted him with funds to purchase works of art in Italy, Andrea proved himself an unworthy steward, dissipated the sum, and, consequently, never returned to France. Salviati, by turns jealous of Rosso and Primaticcio, also left Fontainebleau. The magnificent portrait of Francis I., now at the Louvre, was the work of Titian ; but the most celebrated of these art visitors was Leonardo da Vinci. His sojourn in France was, unfortunately, brief ; but, according to tradition, he died in the arms of Francis.

Michael Angelo had meant to pass over to France after his quarrel with the Florentine Signoria in 1529 ; but a reconciliation having been effected, Francis wrote to him to beg for some of his works, if he were deprived of his personal visit.

'I have such an ardent desire to possess some of your works, that I charge Primaticcio, the bearer of

this letter, to purchase what you may have finished on his arrival, and to allow him, for my sake, to take casts of your Christ in the Minerva and of your Madonna to adorn one of my chapels, as I am told these are the most exquisite of your creations.

‘Praying God, Messire Michael Angelo, to have you in His holy keeping,

‘FRANÇOIS DE L’AUBESPINE.

‘Written at St. Germain-en-Laye, the 8th day of February, 1546.’

The following is a curious proof of Francis’s constant personal interest in the acquisition or discovery of works of art :

‘This city of Nismes,’ says a contemporary writer, ‘possesses more remarkable antiquities than any other French town. Among others is an amphitheatre, now called “les Areines.” The late King Francis (first of his name) took such delight in them that he carried away several statues, with their pedestals and inscriptions, and adorned Fontainebleau and other of his fine edifices with them. More than this, the whole district and the provinces of the Narbonne, Lyonnais, and the Dauphiné being full of such things, this great monarch did not disdain to go underground to the excavations to read the inscriptions on the pedestals and other stones moved from their original places, in order that, if there were any

remarkable works, he might have them exhibited as they merited, instead of leaving them to be despised by everybody.'

The artists invited to Fontainebleau, besides being lodged in the palace and pensioned by the King, were in addition paid for their several works. Francis encouraged them, too, as much by his patronage and favours as by the warmth of his sympathy. He passed hours in their studios, watching their progress, discoursing on art, and discussing its secrets. Laying aside all formalities and etiquette, by his courteous familiarity and cordiality he exercised an extraordinary empire over these ardent spirits. Each wishing to be the first in his royal esteem, frequent quarrels of jealousy arose among them, which it was Francis's care to appease. Benvenuto Cellini's *Memoirs* give a graphic description of these episodes.

Cellini, born in 1500, was the son of a Florentine designer. Benvenuto embraced the profession of goldsmith, contrary to the wish of his parents, who wanted him to be a musician. After one of the violent scenes to which his hot temper frequently exposed him, he left Florence for France, the King's renown as patron of the fine arts tempting him to leave Italy. Rosso's cold reception was more than compensated for by the affability with which Francis greeted him. The King was on the eve of starting for Lyons, war being imminent. He invited Benvenuto to accom-

pany him on the journey, that they might, on their way, talk over the marvels to be executed. The artist consented, and was attached to the suite of the Cardinal of Ferrara, Hippolyte d'Este, brother-in-law to Renée of France. Every evening Cellini held long dissertations on his art with the King at Lyons. There they separated, but, before proceeding south, Francis allotted a residence to Cellini, in which he could prosecute his work until the King's return.

But Cellini fell ill. He began to be weary of the French and their Court, and resolved to return to Italy. The Cardinal furnished him with money for his journey, and for the execution of a basin and ewer intended for the King, on whose return Benvenuto promised to come back.

Benvenuto in the meantime pursued his art at Rome. At the end of a year he received the following letter from the Cardinal :

‘ Benvenuto, dear friend,—The Most Christian King remembered you a few days ago, and expressed a wish to have you in his service. I told him of your promise, to which the King replied : “ The funds for his journey must be sent to him, in accordance with his merits.” ’

On receipt of this epistle, Cellini prepared to set out, when he was thrown into prison, and accused of

having stolen the jewels from the Papal tiara during his confinement with Clement VIII. in the Castle of St. Angelo, at the time of the siege of Rome. Francis I. ordered his ambassador, Jean de Montluc, to claim Benvenuto as one of his retainers, and, if he were really guilty, to bring him to trial. Benvenuto, by his violence with the Pope's agents, thwarted the King's efforts to rescue him. His incarceration was more rigorous than before in the Castle of St. Angelo, whence, however, he contrived to escape, but broke his leg in falling from a height, and fainted away at the foot of the castle. When he came to himself he fancied he was in purgatory, but, recovering his senses slowly, he had strength to reach the city walls, which he passed by a breach. A passing peasant carried him at his request to the steps of St. Peter. There, Cardinal Cornaro, recognising him, procured him an asylum with the Duchess Octavio, wife of the Prefect of Rome, and the Pope's nephew. His adventure speedily became the talk and admiration of the city, and he received numberless visits of congratulation.

The Pope was naturally furious, and succeeded in recapturing the hero, and redoubled his harsh treatment of him. Francis renewed his efforts to obtain Cellini's release, begging the Cardinal of Ferrara to intercede in his behalf.

The Cardinal was passionately fond of the arts.

Astute as a prelate, and cunning as an Italian, he got the Pope to invite him to supper at the Vatican, where he amused his Holiness by relating the adventures and intrigues of the French Court. Then, seizing the culminating moment of his host's hilarity and good-humour, he solicited Cellini's freedom.

'Let him be taken immediately to your palace,' cried the Pope, bursting with laughter.

Orders were then and there given; two of the Cardinal's people were despatched to bring the prisoner to the Cardinal.

No further impediment to Benvenuto's journey to France occurring, he started with his two colleagues, skilled in his art, Pagolo and Ascanio. The trio arrived at Fontainebleau, bringing with them the basin and ewer made for the King. They went to the Cardinal of Ferrara to announce their presence, and the next day Cellini was received by Francis. He relates the interview as follows :

'As soon as I was in his Majesty's presence I fell on my knees, but he instantly raised me with much kindness. I thanked him for obtaining my release from prison, and this good King listened patiently until I had given full expression to my gratitude; then, examining the basin and ewer which I had brought with me :

'"Verily," he said, "I do not believe the ancients ever made anything so beautiful. I remember the

finest specimens of antiquity, and of Italian art, but nothing ever struck me as this does."

'Addressing the Cardinal of Ferrara in French, he praised me to the skies ; after which he said to me in Italian :

"‘‘ Benvenuto, rest and amuse yourself for some days. In the interval I will take measures to give you every facility for the execution of a fine work.’’

'The Court was about to make a journey into the interior of the kingdom. We followed in company with twelve thousand men, travelling at a funeral pace. We often halted in places where there were but two or three houses, so most of us were under canvas, and badly enough off.'

Cellini soon wearied of this lazy life, and did not disguise his feelings to the Cardinal, who advised him to frequent the King's table. One day at dinner, Francis, after conversing most affably with the artist, directed the Cardinal to fix his stipend, and organize a studio for him. Benvenuto found the Cardinal's offer insufficient. An angry altercation ensued, whereupon Cellini mounted his horse and rode away. The King sent after him ; he was overtaken at two miles off, and his good-humour restored by Francis granting him the same stipend as that given to Leonardo da Vinci. Pagolo and Ascanio raised their hands to heaven in thankfulness for a renewal of their ‘honourable bondage.’

Benvenuto selected *le petit* Nesle on the present site of the 'Institut' for his studio, and set to work to execute twelve statues, life-size, representing six gods and six goddesses, for candlesticks for the King.

The Castle of Nesle, rendered famous by the excesses and crimes of Jeanne of Burgundy, had originally belonged to the seigneurs of Nesle in Picardy. After passing through various hands, it at length became the private property of the King. It had fallen into ruins, and was divided into two parts, distinguished as the Great and Little Nesle. There arose some difficulty touching Benvenuto's tenancy, the King having previously allotted the building as the residence of the custodian of the University privileges; but this personage, who cumulated the post of provost with that of custodian, resided at the Châtelet, and, consequently, made no use of the Little Nesle. On hearing of the objection raised, Francis declared that he was proprietor, and would do what he liked with his property, and that if the provost did not give it up willingly, he should be constrained to do so by force.

Thus Cellini took possession under protection of one of the King's officers, who recommended him to guard himself against an attack. Accordingly the artist hired several able-bodied men, and gave them arms of unusual length; but this did not guarantee the new tenant from the threats and insults of the

provost and his friends. Benvenuto, seeing this, begged the King to give him some other locality. Francis grew angry.

'Who are you? What is your name?' he asked.

'I was stupefied at these words,' relates Cellini, 'and unable to answer. The King repeated the question.

"My name is Benvenuto," I said.

"Well, then, if you are the Benvenuto I wot of, do as you like; you have full liberty from me."

I told his Majesty that nothing could alarm me if I were sure of keeping in his good graces.

"So be it," said the King, laughing in his sleeve.
"My good grace will not fail you."

The provost's cabal continued; Benvenuto was warned that surely his life would be taken.

'I left Italy for France,' replied Cellini, 'to serve the King. As to being killed, I know I must die some day, a little sooner or a little later! What does it matter?'

Marmagne (the provost's friend) accompanied Cellini to the Little Nesle, and began to occupy the best rooms himself, saying he had authority to proceed thus. Cellini flatly contradicted him, as he had the King's orders.

After this, he relates:

'This rash, haughty man grossly insulted me in French. I replied by giving him the lie in Italian.'

He laid his hand on his rapier. I seized a long dagger which I had constantly about me, and said :

“ If you dare to draw I will kill you instantly.”

‘ He had two servants with him, and I had my two workmen. Marmagne stood on the defensive, not knowing exactly what to do, muttering all the time that it was more than he could bear.

‘ I said aloud to my workmen :

“ As soon as you see me draw my dagger, lay hold of the servants and stab them. As to this man, I shall easily finish him, and then we will leave.”

‘ Hearing this, Marmagne thought better of it, considering himself fortunate to escape with his life.’

Cellini’s troubles did not end here. A manufacturer of saltpetre occupied some of the outbuildings, and Cellini wished to be rid of him. The Duchesse d’Etampes, who disliked Benvenuto, protected the man, and encouraged him to resist. Cellini gave him three days’ notice to quit; but the man made no sign of moving, whereupon Cellini, sword in hand, ejected him summarily, and had his furniture pitched out of the windows.

‘ The victim went straight to the Duchess, and,’ continues Cellini, ‘ gave her a fiendish and infamous account of what had taken place.

‘ This lady repeated the affair to the King, amplifying it considerably, for she was very eloquent. I was told that his Majesty was almost on the point of

being angry with me, and of sending me severe orders ; but the Dauphin and the Queen took my part with so much skill that his Majesty ended by treating the whole story as a joke.'

Once freed from persecution and annoyance, Cellini set to work in good earnest, working night and day to execute the King's commands.

Francis, to encourage him, and to prove his royal satisfaction at the present of the basin and ewer from the Cardinal of Ferrara, gave Cellini a recompense. When he had modelled the Jupiter, Vulcan, and Mars, he began to mould the Jupiter in silver. The King happened to be in Paris, and Cellini went to pay his respects to him.

' As soon as his Majesty saw me, he beckoned me to him, and, smiling, asked me if I had anything fine to show him. I gave him a report of my work, which he much wished to see, and came after dinner to my place, accompanied by Madame d'Etampes, the Cardinal of Lorraine, the King and Queen of Navarre, the Dauphin and Dauphiness, and many of the Court.

' I was at work when the King arrived. He heard the tic-tac of the hammers, and forbade anyone to announce him, and, to my surprise, he walked in just as I held in my hand a plate of silver which was to be used for the Jupiter's body. One of my workmen was busy on the head, another on the legs ; altogether

we were making noise enough. At my side was a little Frenchman, who had just vexed me by some piece of mischief. I gave him a kick, which sent him flying at the very moment the King entered, and the lad tumbled up against him, greatly to his Majesty's amusement and my mortification.

' The King began by inquiring what I was doing, commanding me to continue my work, which he praised exceedingly, adding that I ought to do as little as possible with my own hands, lest I should fatigue myself, and to enlist as many workmen as I thought fit, without considering the expense. He then returned to the palace, after having loaded me with favours. The following day I was sent for to the palace while the King was at table, the Cardinal of Ferrara sitting opposite to him. They were at the second course as I entered and approached his Majesty, who asked me to show him a salt-cellar. I went to fetch a model of one. When the King saw it he was astonished, and exclaimed :

' " This design is a thousand times more beautiful than I could have imagined. You must execute it in gold."

' I raised some objections on account of the length of time required for such work.

' The King replied :

' " If one were always to contemplate the conclusion of a thing, nothing would ever be begun."

'Then, addressing the company around him, he expatiated on works of this kind, and the perseverance and courage they required. Thereupon, I observed that when artists were encouraged by princes such as he, difficult undertakings became easy. The King ordered his treasurer, the Vicomte d'Arles, to give me a thousand crowns of old gold of good weight.'

Very soon after this incident, Francis sent Cellini gratuitous letters of naturalization.

'They were brought to me,' he continues, 'by one of the first secretaries of his Majesty, Antoine le Maçon, who remitted them to me on behalf of the King, with profuse expressions of his royal esteem.

'I thanked the secretary, asking him at the same time to explain to me the purport of the said letters. He could not help laughing, but told me their meaning. When he related the result of his mission to his Majesty, he, too, laughed heartily, adding :

'"That he may better understand why I sent them, go and tell him I name him Lord of Little Nesle, and that I give it to him. He will comprehend that more readily than letters of naturalization."

One day, in a burst of enthusiasm, the King said to Cellini :

'Friend, I know not which of the two pleasures is greatest, that of a prince who meets with an artist

after his own heart, or that of an artist of talent who finds a prince who not only understands his inspirations, but furnishes him with the means of realizing them !'

"Sire," I answered, "I am that man. My happiness is undoubtedly the greatest that can be realized."

"Let us say that we are both equally fortunate," said his Majesty, smiling.

'I left this interview in an ecstasy of delight, and returned home.'

Clouds, however, were gathering around Benvenuto. Madame d'Etampes had never been reconciled to him, and the Cardinal of Ferrara ended by growing weary of the artist's irascible temper. The King was, however, still anxious to insure his settling in France, and would have given him an abbey had one been vacant. Funds failed for the continuation of Cellini's works. Madame d'Etampes, by refusing to go to his studio, was the means of preventing Francis from paying his accustomed visits there. Benvenuto determined to return to Italy. It is worthy of remark that, in his violent and bitter attacks on the personages of the French Court, Cellini never speaks of Francis but in terms of respectful attachment and sympathy, an incontrovertibly valuable testimony in favour of this sovereign.

CHAPTER XII.

THE KING'S POLICY—RELIGIOUS MATTERS—
SOLIMAN II.

To Francis the Treaty of Cambray was but a stepping-stone to the recovery of his sons. Scarcely was it signed when he protested that necessity alone made him sanction it. In his heart he never gave up his pretensions to Italy ; the Duchy of Milan he considered his sacred inheritance ; the six years of peace following the treaty were spent in preparing for war by the reorganization of the army and contracting alliances. Important reforms were effected in the army ; the *gendarmerie* was reconstituted ; fresh infantry corps were formed. Great disorders had arisen in the provinces during Francis I.'s captivity ; the nobles acted arbitrarily, imposing their authority by deeds of violence and strife. The King, to combat this anarchy, revived the assizes known under the name of *les grands jours*. Kings and nobles presided at these courts of justice, held from time to time to

correct the abuses of local magistrates. In furtherance of this reform Francis ordered that assizes should be held at Poictiers by members of the Paris Parliament. For this purpose a president, twelve councillors, and other officers were appointed ; their jurisdiction extending over Anjou, Touraine, Maine, Aulnay, Angoumois, and La Marche. During the session, which lasted two months, five hundred verbal appeals were heard and decided. Capital sentences were also passed upon several gentlemen of birth, and twelve or thirteen in the town of Poictiers alone were beheaded, whilst the severest measures were taken for the suppression of brigandage.

The reunion of Brittany to France had been accomplished in 1532 without opposition, and with the concurrence of the States-General. Francis had all the while carefully nursed his maternal inheritance, checking waste and squandering in several departments. Under the pretext of a crusade to be undertaken against the Turks, he asked the Pope's permission to levy subsidies on Church property. His Holiness, unwilling to offend the Emperor, demurred. The King thereupon appealed to his clergy ; who, dispensing with a bull from Rome, seconded his Majesty's wish.

The problem of foreign alliances was more difficult to solve. The dawning Reformation was agitating Europe and disturbing old international relations.

The causes of this religious revolution were complex and deep, and are too well known to be recapitulated here; suffice it to recall the manner in which the movement originated.

An Augustinian monk, Martin Luther, of the Wittenberg University, a man of a bold, impetuous, simple character, betook himself to Rome in 1510. Shocked by the abuses he found there, he raised, on his return to Germany, a cry against the Papal Court, which turned a deaf ear to the warning. In 1517 the scandalous sale of indulgences aroused his biting wrath in ninety-five theses which were received with much favour by the public. For these he was summoned before the Diet at Augsburg, but fearing the censure which awaited him, he refused to appear. The Duke of Saxony took him under his protection, and declined to give him up to the Pope's legate. His views gathered strength as they spread. From reprobating indulgences, he went on to attack the ceremonies and even the dogmas of the Church.

Leo X. disdained for some time to notice an ecclesiastical dispute carried on in barbarous Latin, but at length, on the 15th July, 1520, he issued a bull condemning forty-one of Luther's propositions. On the 20th November following, the reformer burnt the bull before the gates of Wittenberg amid the applause of the public. Charles V., who had

been recently elected Emperor, thereupon convoked a Diet at Worms in January, 1521, to stifle the new doctrines. Luther boldly defended himself; but the Elector of Saxony, his staunch protector, perceiving the danger, hurried Luther away secretly to the Castle of Wartburg in Thuringia, where he remained concealed nine months. During this interval he was declared heretic and excommunicated. His retreat at Wartburg neither tamed nor discouraged him, and he left it more than ever eager and determined. Princes espoused his cause and became converts, all the more readily as it gave them a pretext for seizing Church property. Charles then found himself face to face with a general rising. Nevertheless, as at all times, political interests outweighed his religious principles; and to combat the League, headed against him by Clement VII., he was ready to make an arm of the Protestant revolt, and to enlist on his side the bands of the fanatical Frundsberg, intent on pillaging and destroying Rome.

The Treaty of Cambray changed the situation. Charles V., reconciled with the Sovereign Pontiff, went to Italy to be crowned by his Holiness in the church of San Petronio at Bologna. The Emperor, kneeling, kissed the Pope's hand before an assembly of princes and ecclesiastical dignitaries. This imposing ceremony was destined to be rudely disturbed. A deputation of reformers, ignorant of Court eti-

quette, rough and uncereemonious in their ways, no respecters of persons, poured into the church to present their profession of faith, drawn up by Melancthon, relying on the recent treaty. The Pope's legate was furious, and accused Charles V. of complicity; the Emperor did his utmost to palliate the offence, tried conciliation with the unruly zealots, but all to no purpose. He thereupon decided to break with the Protestants, annulled the edict for the sale of ecclesiastical property, and threatened with exile or death those who persisted to uphold the heresy. The German princes were indignant, and formed the League of 'Smalkald' for the protection of their common rights. The unity of the German Empire was broken up.

Elsewhere in Europe, the Reformation was making rapid strides. The Duke of Holstein, an ardent Lutheran, called to replace his cruel nephew, Christiern, as King of Denmark and Sweden, introduced the Reformation into his new States. It was promulgated in Switzerland by Zwinglius and Calvin. In England, Henry VIII. had seceded from the Church of Rome on the occasion of his divorce; but, full of theological pretensions, he abused Luther, and imposed his own particular confession of faith on his subjects. The Reformation spread to France also, but under a rather different aspect.

Francis, like Marguerite, had great depth of religious feeling. If in his life this sentiment held a subordinate place, it was because he was carried away by violent passions and active warfare. But in each serious crisis of his moral existence, it revived with sincerity and warmth. This state of feeling prepared Francis for the Reformation. Indeed, he greeted the first manifestation of the movement without any disapprobation. As a man of letters, his sympathies were enlisted in seeing the Huguenots given to the study of languages, whilst Catholic theologians condemned it as dangerous to faith. The brother and sister were of the same mind. But while Marguerite, with lofty disinterestedness, and a superior sentiment of humanity, remained all her life true to herself, Francis, spoiled by the pride of absolute power, fell into a series of contradictions that form the weakest and most unfortunate episodes of his reign.

After the papal condemnation of the works of Luther, the faculty of theology of La Sorbonne had had them solemnly burnt in the porch of Notre Dame; whilst the syndic, the famous Beda, the opponent of the royal college, pursued with great bitterness those men of letters whose writings might contain a reproduction of some of the condemned doctrines. Even the most trivial of these, from a doctrinal point of view—as, for instance, the attempt

to maintain that there were three women of the name of Magdalen, and not one only, in Holy Writ —was regarded as heretical. He ended in anathematizing (and in excluding from giving instruction) the first professors of the University, Lefebvre d'Etaples, Farel, Guillaume Roussel, Vatable, and some others. Briçonnet, Bishop of Meaux, who carried on a spiritual correspondence with the Duchesse d'Alençon, was a liberal and cultivated man. He offered the condemned professors a refuge in his diocese, endowed them with benefices, and presented them to the Duchess, who was interested in them on account of their learning, their earnestness, and their ardent convictions. The Sorbonne, furious, thereupon attacked the Bishop, whose books were examined. Numberless errors were discovered, and he was arraigned. Briçonnet was not made of the stuff to fight. An unconscious heretic, he acknowledged his errors, and, thanks to Marguerite's intercession, the proceedings against him were stayed.

His *protégés*, nevertheless, maintained their doctrines boldly before the tribunal. Marguerite intervened in their favour, and persuaded the King to put a stop to the inquisitorial trial. During his absence in Spain, the Sorbonne revived the persecution. Marguerite was again the guardian angel of the persecuted, and obtained an order from the im-

prisoned monarch to suspend proceedings. Berquin, an Artois gentleman and a friend of Erasmus, wrote some polemical works, for which he was arrested and thrown into prison. Marguerite interfered, and had him released. When he was set at liberty, Berquin, so far from retracting, recommenced his proselytism in his writings and speeches, exposing himself to a second imprisonment, from which Marguerite had difficulty to free him. After his liberation she wrote to Montmorency, whose services had been enlisted :

‘I love Berquin as I love myself. In helping him out of prison, you may say that you have released me.’

The Sorbonne avenged itself by censuring the writings of Berquin’s friend Erasmus, but Francis, shocked at this libel on the learned foreigner, ordered Parliament to annul it.

Even the gentle poet Marot did not escape accusation. He had attacked no theological dogma, it is true, but he had spoken irreverently of theologians. While Marguerite was in Spain, he was charged with heresy, and imprisoned. An order for his release was sent from Madrid; but he was again arrested on the plea of having favoured the escape of a prisoner. Once more an order from the King was made in his favour. His scoffing spirit, unabated by persecution, infuriated the theologians. His house

at Blois was searched, a number of forbidden books confiscated ; but the occupant had fled, and taken refuge in Navarre, near the Queen, whence he went to Italy to join Madame Renée, a fervent Huguenot, who was on the most intimate and affectionate terms with her sister-in-law, Marguerite.

Later on, having obtained permission to return to France, he pretended to have become discreet, and wrote to assure Francis of his good intentions :

‘Ces Lombards avec qui je chemine
M’ont fort appris à faire bonne mine,
A un seul mot de Dieu ne deviser
A parler peu à poltroniser,
Dessus un mot, une heure je m’arrête
S’on parle à moy, je réponds de la tête.’

In spite of this vaunted circumspection, he had scarcely set foot in France when he again compromised himself, and was compelled to fly to Geneva. There the austere Calvinists, scandalized at the poet’s easy morals, would have hanged him, but his friend Calvin saved him from an ignominious death. He crossed the Alps, and spent his remaining days at Turin, where he died in 1544. To him is due the fine versification of the Psalms, which was set to music and for a while sung at Court. Theodore de Beza added to the collection, but not with the same ‘*joliveté*’ as Marot.

Francis’s conscience now and again reproached

him for affording his royal protection to Protestants, although he held Papal authority in small esteem. For fifty years, through the Borgias, the Roveres, and the Medicis, Kings had too often seen the Popes defer religion to private interests to retain any great respect for the wearers of the tiara. And at one moment it is asserted Francis was strongly inclined to follow Henry VIII.'s example. According to Brantôme :

' This great King, however zealous an adherent of the Church of Rome, felt his spirit of obedience to it shaken after the interview with the King of England at Boulogne and Calais, when both declared themselves greatly discontented with the Pope and his Court for the exorbitant sums drawn annually from France, and I know from authentic sources that the King was on the point of following the Englishman's example. But the marriage of the Pope's niece with the Duke of Orleans restored everything, whereas the marriage of the Englishman with Anne Boleyn spoilt everything.'

Francis, however, was aware that a separation from the Church of Rome involved a renunciation of his claims in Italy. Moreover, the Reformers were always raising questions as to absolute power, whilst their violence and roughness were repugnant to his feelings. In Germany, sectaries like the Anabaptists had distinguished themselves by their van-

dalism and lawlessness, and were preaching disorder and the overthrow of civil power. Even the most serious reformers approved of the destruction of works of art, and were ready to impress upon all the observance of the severest austerity.

No wonder, then, that we find Brantôme writing :

‘ The King hated the new sect, which tended more to the destruction of kingdoms and monarchies than to the salvation of souls.’

The French reformers were not more worldly-wise than those of Germany. Certain pastoral letters, reflecting on the conduct of the Protestants, posted on the walls of Meaux, were torn down, a wool-comber, named Jean le Clerc, making himself most conspicuous. For this offence he was arrested, flogged, and branded. This did not deter him ; and for a second offence his right hand and nose were cut off, after which he was burnt at the stake, thus becoming the first martyr of the Reformation in France.

In the month of May following a statue of Our Lady was desecrated, and dragged through the gutter in the Rue des Rosiers. Francis’s ire was roused by what he considered an insult to his sovereign authority ; he ordered a new statue on the model of the one destroyed, and replaced it himself in the niche whence the other had been taken. This act of reparation was made solemnly, the

King heading the procession on the 11th June, 1528.

At the same time, and with the King's consent, fresh proceedings were taken against Berquin, who persevered in his efforts of proselytism. Marguerite's influence was unable to save him. After standing in the pillory he was branded, and then burnt alive in the porch of Notre Dame. Persecution at once became the order of the day. Provincial councils were convoked to combat Luther's doctrines; executions followed; Duprat and Beda triumphed. The Queen of Navarre, abhorred by the Sorbonne, was accused by it of spreading heresy by protecting the reformers. Navarre, her kingdom, and Berri, her appanage, became their places of refuge. Gérard Roussel, an ex-Dominican friar, repudiated by the University of Paris, was promoted by her to the See of Oléron, and Lefebvre d'Etaples was, through her interest, appointed Librarian of Blois.

She read prayers in French, and attended sermons preached in layman's garb. She adopted the Mass in seven points, so called because it differed in seven points from the Roman liturgy. She received in her own apartments a sort of Sacrament, in which the King himself participated, and finally appointed two Augustinian monks, accused of heresy, as her chaplains. These numerous delinquencies drew on her a clamour of anathemas from the pulpit, and

one monk went so far as to suggest she should be sewn in a sack and drowned.

Marguerite smiled at these furious onsets, and vouchsafed no reply to them. At length they acted a farce in the College of Navarre, in which the Queen was represented as a fury reading the Bible in French. For this insult the King ordered the actors to be sent to prison; but owing to Marguerite's intervention they were released, after a few days' detention. In no way warned or mollified, the priests continued to heap insult upon insult. Her poem: 'The Mirror of a Sinful Soul,' was publicly censured, as no mention was made of saints or purgatory in it. The King once more interfered, and compelled the sentence to be reversed by the University.

Beda was banished, then pardoned; but his rancorous zeal was unmitigated. He attacked the King in his discourses, was condemned to confess and apologize for his misdemeanour in the porch of Notre Dame; he was imprisoned at Mont St. Michel, where he died on the 8th January, 1537.

Beda's condemnation was Marguerite's triumph. She was considered the protectress of the Reformation throughout Europe. Prince Hohenlohe, dean of the Chapter of Strasburg, appealed to her for permission to come to Paris, with the view to conciliate

the points of difference between German and French reformers.

Erasmus expressed his admiration for her, and encouraged her to continue to be the patroness of men of letters, and of the true friends of Christ. Melancthon thanked her for her compassionate sympathy for reformers, and recommended Claude Baduel to her.

The Queen was constantly appearing as a suppliant before her brother. When once his burst of anger had abated, she could obtain concessions from him ; for in reality they were of one heart and one mind. Francis cared much more for literature than for theology, and once more urged Erasmus to come to Paris. Melancthon received an invitation at the same time, the King hoping that his eloquence might bring about a reconciliation ; but the Elector Palatine, who knew the hopelessness of controversial disputes, would not allow Melancthon to leave Germany.

At this time the Huguenots had everything to gain by remaining calm. They chose, however, the opposite attitude, placarding the walls, and distributing in the streets of Paris papers containing sacrilegious observations on the Mass. A copy was surreptitiously pasted on the door of the King's chamber in his Château of Blois ; his indignation at this direct attack may easily be imagined.

Montmorency and Tournon, the strongest haters of Protestantism, fanned the flame of Francis's rage, and the prisons were promptly filled with men and women of every social grade. On the 27th January, 1535, the King, in solemn procession, bearing the relics of saints and martyrs, passed through the principal thoroughfares of the city. After the ceremony the King and Queen dined with the Bishop of Paris. On the same day six Lutherans were burnt at the stake, amid the groans of the populace, which would fain have torn the martyrs from the hands of their executioners. In the following week edicts for the extermination of all heretical sects and for the abolition of printing were published. Panic seized upon all, which Marguerite was powerless to stem, and it was with the utmost difficulty she succeeded in saving one or two lives—among them that of her friend Gérard Roussel. A more efficacious intervention happily, for the time, came from without.

Charles V. was the champion of Catholicism in Europe, and Francis could find no allies against the Emperor except among the heretics, of whom the King of England was the chief. Strange to say, though Francis and Henry were so often at war, they had a certain liking for each other; they were both of strong impulsive temperament, but Henry was of a coarser, more violent nature than Francis. In spite of political antagonism they understood each

other, whereas neither comprehended the calculating unreliability of Charles.

This common mistrust of the Emperor cemented a friendship between the two Kings. Twelve years after their interview on the Field of the Cloth of Gold another took place at the same spot, when they swore mutual fidelity; Henry promised to be a firm ally in the war about to be declared against the Emperor, and Francis undertook to procure from Rome the sanction for Henry's divorce. On the strength of this reciprocal good understanding the two monarchs held fêtes, each investing the other with the orders of St. Michael and of the Garter, as in the days of their youthful confidence. The German Princes of the Smalkald League likewise made overtures to the Kings; but as by a clause of the Cambray Treaty Francis was precluded from taking part in religious disputes, he found the pretext of some irregularity in the election of Ferdinand, King of the Romans, and thus justified his defence of old Germanic liberties.

Such an alliance against the Emperor had at least a solid basis, but Francis, with his usual versatility and inconsistency, dazzled and bewildered by his passion for Italy, convinced himself that a marriage between his second son, the Duke of Orleans, and Catherine, the last descendant of Cosmo and Laurenzo de Medicis, would revive his influence in the Penin-

sula, and be a fatal blow for the Emperor, who was strongly averse to the alliance. Clement VII., on the contrary, rejoiced at the idea of his niece being a daughter-in-law of the French King, and the marriage, after several years of intrigue between the Sovereign Pontiff and the ambassadors of the two princes, was at last celebrated in the autumn of 1533. This union was doubly fatal to France, in the future through Catherine herself, and in the present because it introduced an unfortunate element calculated to break the Protestant alliances the King had just secured. Even if Clement VII. had not died the following year, he would never have been able to bring over Italy to the King, whilst he had already begun to alienate England. In fact, Francis, after promising Henry that he would make his divorce a condition of the marriage, succumbed to the artifices of the Pope, who, anxious at any cost to avoid a rupture with Charles V., deceived Francis with promises he was careful to ignore as soon as the marriage had taken place. Henry was indignant; he addressed the bitterest reproaches to his ‘brother,’ and cooled considerably towards him, whilst he waited for the proposals to be made by Charles V.

Francis, who was no more capable of grasping an idea than he was of foreseeing the consequences of his conduct, thought it possible to obtain the support of Protestants outside the kingdom, whilst he per-

secuted those within it. But he was mistaken. The stakes erected in Paris brought forth such severe remonstrance from the German princes that he trembled lest he should lose their alliance. He wrote to offer explanations for his conduct, drawing a distinction between the cause of German Lutherans (who respected their chiefs greatly) and that of the revolutionary French Calvinists. Further, he sent his secretary, Voré, to bring about a reconciliation, as his sole desire was to enable the supporters of the two doctrines to arrive at an amicable understanding.

With this view, too, he renewed his entreaties to Melancthon to join with him in a work so vital to Christendom, promising him a passport, and even hostages, to ensure his personal safety, would he but come to Paris; and on the ensuing 16th July he published a decree putting a stop to further persecution, God's anger being appeased, and declaring all fugitives were free to return to their country provided they would lead the lives of good Catholics.

The situation was further complicated by Francis's secret alliance with the Turks, who, for the first time, intervened in European affairs. Commercial guarantees had, since the Crusades, been established between Europe and the Levant; and from the time of St. Louis consuls existed at Alexandria. Marseilles, then a very independent municipality, sent consuls

at its own expense to the African coast, and entered into direct communication with the Princes. Politics were foreign to their proceedings, which were of a purely mercantile character, and Mussulmans still continued to hold all Christians in abhorrence.

Soliman II. was Sultan at this time. According to the Venetian ambassadors, this great Prince was of pale, swarthy hue, had deep-set eyes, an aquiline nose, and a long neck. He wore a *tolopan*, the hood of which covered his brow, and gave him a sombre air. A Prince of a voluptuous nature, generous, proud—one day overbearing, and the next humble.

Soliman had noble aspirations, generous impulses, and an innate love of justice. He succeeded his father, Selim I., in 1520, at twenty-four years of age. His first care was to repress the cruelties and abuses of the previous reign. Then he took Belgrade, and the year after occupied Rhodes, which for two hundred and thirteen years had been held by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. A high estimate of his character may be formed from the letter in which he replied to some remonstrances made by Francis concerning Christians in the East.

' You speak of a church once the property of Christians at Jerusalem, since converted into a mosque. I have examined in detail all you say on this subject. The friendship and affection existing

between my glorious Majesty and you make me desirous of conforming to your wishes. But this affair is not a question of property—it concerns our religion. It is long since this church was made a mosque. Mussulmans have worshipped there—consequently it is contrary to our religious law that it should ever serve for any other purpose. Thus it is impossible for your request to be granted by me, the source of happiness.

'As to other places of worship, except mosques, they shall continue Christian property. No molestation shall be allowed of those who dwell there, under our equitable reign. They may live in peace with the aid of our protection, and may repair both doors and windows, and occupy in all security the oratories and apartments where they now dwell. No one shall oppress or annoy them in any manner whatsoever.'

Until the year 1827, no clear light was thrown on the secret dealings between Francis I. and Soliman II. Thanks, however, to the able researches of M. Hammer, authentic testimony has been obtained from two foreign sources, namely, the reports of the ambassadors of Venice at Constantinople, and from the German historians.

After the defeat at Pavia, the Regent Louise despatched a plenipotentiary secretly to Soliman II.,

to endeavour to rouse his sympathy, and create a diversion in Eastern Europe—a bold step, in the then state of public feeling in Europe ; but Louise was not wanting in boldness. Her first ambassador and his twelve companions were murdered on their way across Bosnia—the documents of Frangipani, and of two ambassadors of King Ferdinand at a later period attest the fact.

It is probable that Louise had no time to consult her son about the first expedition. For the second she obtained the consent of Francis.

Frangipani was the bearer of a letter from the King to Soliman. He was received by the Sultan, on his arrival at Constantinople, with great state, for Soliman was anxious for a European ally. Moreover, his generous heart was touched by Francis's misfortunes, and he addressed a letter of encouragement and sympathy to him.

' Thou, who art a Frenchman and King of France ! It is not surprising that Kings should be defeated, and be made prisoners. Take courage, suffer not thyself to be cast down. We, also, following the example of our glorious ancestors, have continually conquered provinces and taken fortresses. Our horse is saddled, and our sword girt day and night.'

Francis was at Bayonne when Frangipani, loaded

with magnificent presents, returned to France. The King replied to Soliman's letter from that town.

In this correspondence no allusion was made to war; nevertheless, a few months later the Turkish invasion in Hungary alarmed Christian Europe. The last of the Jagellons, the young King Louis II., perished in the field of Mohács on the Danube, and the Turks were within a few leagues of Vienna.

The time had indeed come for France to attack the Empire. But the King trembled for his children.

After Louis II.'s death, the Hungarian monarchy being elective, the nobles proceeded to nominate a successor; the true Hungarians supported John Zapsolski, Voivode of Transylvania; the candidate of the German party was Ferdinand of Austria, Charles V.'s brother. France, supported by England and Venice, was in favour of Zapsolski, and sent him the ambassador Rinçon, a Spaniard by descent, with orders to proceed to Poland, after fulfilling his mission in Hungary, to enlist King Sigismund's influence in Zapsolski's favour. In the meantime the Diet of Presburg decided in favour of Ferdinand, who marched against his rival and defeated him on the plains of Tokay. Zapsolski, seeing his cause irretrievably lost, entered into a curious pact with Rinçon (published for the first time in the present century) by which he stipulated to transmit his kingdom to the

second son of Francis, Henri d'Orléans, regardless of traditional law. Moreover, while Ferdinand was exercising nominal power in Presburg, Zapolski placed himself under the protection of the Turks, who occupied all the Hungarian fortresses. Soliman, in return for this vassalage, promised to promote John's interests, and after receiving his accustomed homage on the field of Mohács, the Turkish troops marched forward towards Germany. It was this threat of invasion that induced Charles V. to yield to Francis on the knotty Burgundy question.

By the Treaty of Cambray, Francis engaged to break off his alliance with Soliman, even to join the Emperor in a war against him should he attack Christianity. On this Charles V., at the head of a formidable army, set out to meet Soliman, who, having seized Buda and made it a Pachalich, made one or two attacks on Vienna; but on the approach of imperial forces withdrew to Constantinople, and immediately began preparations for a fresh invasion.

The Czar of Russia, the King of Poland, Ferdinand, and Charles V. sent ambassadors to Soliman in the hope of deterring him from the execution of his warlike plan. Francis held aloof; but when the Sultan was ostensibly preparing to march upon Germany, Rinçon was again commissioned to do all in his power to dissuade the Sultan from advancing. He had a magnificent reception, but obtained no

change in Soliman's purpose, and Charles V. interpreted this isolated interference on the part of Francis as complicity with Turkey. The accusation was false, as a letter of M. Baif, French ambassador at Venice, dated 5th August, 1532, proves.

'M. Rinçon is staying with me now ; his journey has not improved his health. The Turk gave him for answer, that he would willingly have withdrawn at the King's request, out of respect for their old friendship, if he had not gone so far ; but now they would say he was afraid of Charles of Spain, as they call him. Moreover, he is astonished that the King should take such a step in favour of a man who has used him so ill, and who can be no Christian, as he has attacked the head of his religion, putting in prison the Grand Vicar of Christ, and robbing and pillaging Christians under pretence of making war on Moslems. As for the rest, M. Rinçon says Soliman's power is incredible. An advance-guard of eighty thousand men precede the main body of his army by three or four days' march ; they burn and destroy the enemy's land. In the camp there are three hundred thousand paid men, some with ten, twenty, thirty, or even sixty horses apiece. More than a hundred thousand horses and fifty thousand mules are employed for the ammunition waggons. M. Rinçon arrived at the camp after

dark. To do him honour every Turk held a torch on the point of his lance, and as they numbered more than four hundred thousand, you may suppose that the illumination of Rome and the fireworks of the castle of St. Angelo would, in comparison, be as a village to the city of Paris.'

Soliman besieged Vienna from the 27th September to the 14th October. Eventually repulsed, he returned to Constantinople, and finding all Europe leagued against him, he signed an armistice with Ferdinand of Austria, and decided on making an Eastern campaign against Persia, which had assumed a threatening attitude. Still he could not altogether abstain from harassing Charles, and with this object he made a hostile demonstration on the Island of Coron in the Archipelago, and named the corsair Barbarossa admiral of his naval forces, ordering him to infest the Mediterranean coasts.

Year by year Francis and Charles V. grew more and more distrustful of each other. The Emperor, to whom the Treaty of Cambray was advantageous, wished to avoid war; Francis, on the contrary, was making preparations for it. Charles, resolving to be beforehand with his rival, formed a league of the Italian Princes, and stirred up Europe against him by denouncing his alliance with Soliman. A duel of

angry words and insults followed. Charles V. challenged Francis to deny the charge by contributing men and money to the Crusade. Francis retorted he was no man's banker, and lent his soldiers to nobody; but that if the Emperor was not sure of Italy, he would willingly undertake to guard it with a body of fifty thousand men.

The good Queen Eleanor vainly tried to mediate and to induce her brother to relinquish a little of the hard and unjust Treaty of Cambray, which rankled like an arrow in the King's heart. If, for instance, he would but consent to the repurchase of the suzerainty of Artois and Flanders, an interview might then be arranged, and these two lions might come to a fraternal agreement. Charles, however, was not a man to suffer sentiment to counterbalance material interests. All Eleanor's efforts failed, and a final insult caused the cup to overflow.

Francis still kept his eye on Italy, keeping with the Duke of Milan a secret ambassador, named Merveilles. Merveilles got mixed up in a quarrel in which Balthasar Castiglione was killed, and he was arrested, condemned, and executed; although his mission was not publicly recognised, it was understood, and his death, in consequence, was a breach of the law of nations. Francis was furious and demanded reparation; the Duke, instigated by Charles, refused; Francis declared he would take it by force,

and at once concentrated his army in the south on the Italian and Spanish frontiers.

While these measures were being taken, Barbarossa opened his Mediterranean expedition by taking possession of Tunis. Now Spain had struggled for centuries against the Moors, had driven them back to Africa, and as a more effectual guarantee had established colonies at Oran and Algiers, making from time to time inroads upon Tunis and Tripoli. Thus Barbarossa's attack affected Spain directly. The danger of allowing the Turks to invade this coast was apparent. Charles organized a naval expedition on a large scale to arrest the corsair's success, declared himself the champion of Christianity, and begged Francis, whatever might be his grievances, to suspend hostilities until his return. Francis, under pressure of public opinion, could but consent, though probably his good wishes were not for the Christian army. Europe was imbued with the belief in his alliance with Turkey, and persisted in accusing him unjustly, until, irritated beyond measure, Francis declared himself Soliman's ally, and despatched a special ambassador to recall him from the East, and to assure him of his support. The Sieur of La Fôret, a distinguished Greek scholar, who became a cardinal later, was chosen to fulfil the mission.

Germans, Italians, and Spaniards flocked to

Charles's standard. He relates himself, in a most curious manner, the story of his rapid expedition in three letters addressed to Hannart, and another written to his sister, Marie, Regent of the Netherlands :

'June 13, 1535.

'TRUSTY AND WELL-BELOVED,

'We embarked at Barcelona on the penultimate Sunday of last month ; the next day, Monday, in the evening, we rallied our ships at a league's distance from the bay. The wind, favourable at first, having turned against us, we neared Majorca on Tuesday. We coasted that island and Minorca, and visited some of their towns until Saturday. On Sunday we sailed with the whole army ; there was very little breeze at first, but it soon freshened, and the sea rose high. We passed the gulf, and we were forced to cast anchor at the Island of Saint Pierre, off the coast of Sardinia. Our ships were scattered, but joined us on the following Thursday at Cagliari, where we found the Marquis del Guast with the galleys, gallions, carricks, brigantines, and other vessels from Genoa with Italian and German troops and Spanish infantry on board, together with ammunition and provisions of every sort. We muster, including six galleys of the Pope, four of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem, and several Portuguese galleys and caravels, about three hundred sail.

‘We visited Cagliari, where we were received as if in triumph; and after giving orders for the disposing of the vessels and the distribution of rations, we sailed for Tunis, committing ourselves to God’s care and guidance.

‘We learnt from some Christian captives that Barbarossa had left Tunis some days before, that he had distributed his galleys between the Tunis Canal, La Goulette, and other points of the Camarck, which he was repairing and fortifying to be ready for us.’

‘June 13 (on African soil).

‘We embarked before daybreak on Tuesday the 15th, and sighted land here two hours before sunset with the majority of our fleet, which cast anchor in the Port of Farina, whence we coasted as far as the Gulf of Tunis, three miles distant from La Goulette.

‘We told off one or two ships to reconnoitre the position of the castle, its environs, and the best place for landing. Several cannon-shots were exchanged, but without damaging either party. It was getting late, so we did not continue operations any further that day.

‘The next morning the German and Spanish infantry landed, accompanied by their chiefs, captains, gentlemen, and principal officers of the army. Our household was all but complete. We

took a rather strong tower, some citadels, villages, and houses scattered near the port upon the site of the ancient city of Carthage. The infantry encamped, and we took up our abode there. We were informed by some Turkish and Moorish prisoners that La Goulette was amply provided with munition and means of defence. Tunis was equally prepared, and as it would have been a risk to go far away from our fleet, whence alone we could procure provisions, we determined to land our artillery, and make trenches in order to attack and take the castle.'

'June 24.

'Our entrenchments having progressed greatly, and our artillery having approached, a troop of men on foot and on horseback sallied forth and attacked our sappers with great impetuosity, thinking they would instantly give way; the battalion placed to guard them in case of a surprise held the ground bravely until the Spanish infantry, stationed not far off, came to the rescue. The enemy were repulsed, leaving about thirty of their men slain, among whom I hear were three important Turkish captains, whose bodies they would fain have recovered had they dared.'

'June 28.

'The day after (Saturday), in the morning, the enemy posted some guns in a small plantation of

fig and olive trees, from which they fired on our camp. For our honour's sake we resolved to drive them out, and with the help of a detachment of arquebusiers we succeeded admirably; they took flight, and we captured their guns. Our men-at-arms pursued them to within a league of Tunis, in sight of the town; we killed about fifty of them, and had on our side but one wounded, the Marquis of Montyar, whom we hope to save.

'The Marquis Alarçon has brought us twelve hundred men from Naples and Sicily, among whom are several barons and nobles with vessels laden with provisions, so now our army is well provided for.'

'Three Moors have brought letters from the Bey of Tunis, his relatives and friends, to ask permission to join us against Barbarossa; they entreat us to send galleys for them to a certain pass in the mountains that they may reach us by sea. Of course we shall do so.'

'We are making all diligence with the trenches. Our heavy artillery will shortly be here; in three or four days we can begin the attack; I am full of hope as to the issue.'

'July 14, 1535.

'To-day, after raising a battery by sea and by land against the fortress of La Goulette, the town was

taken by storm after a siege lasting from three in the morning till one in the afternoon, and carried so brilliantly and skilfully that our losses were insignificant; a large number of galleys, brigantines, galliots, and foists, with a considerable amount of artillery, fell into our possession. As we are now busy making our move hence to Tunis, I shall not be more prolix to-day.'

On the 22nd and 23rd of July, Charles V. wrote a detailed account of the fall of La Goulette to his sister, the Queen of Hungary; relating at the same time his meeting with Barbarossa, whose army was routed and dispersed.

On the 23rd July he addressed a letter to Francis announcing his successes, adding: 'I have no doubt of the great pleasure this good news will give you, so beneficial to the common weal of the Christian republic.' He wrote the same day to his sister, the Queen of France, informing her that among Barbarossa's prisoners were seventy-one Frenchmen; amongst them, some of the attendants of the Dauphin and of the Duke of Orleans had been captured on board the galley of the late Captain Portando.

Charles V., victorious by land and by sea, reinstated the Bey of Tunis, who declared himself his tributary; and on the 17th August the Emperor

embarked for Europe. He first landed at Palermo on the 4th September, and on the 25th November following made his triumphal entry into Naples. There he confirmed the authority of Alexander, Duke of Florence, and as a further mark of favour gave him his illegitimate daughter, Marguerite, in marriage. Meanwhile his relations with France became more and more strained.

CHAPTER XIII.

RENEWAL OF WAR—DEATH OF THE DAUPHIN-MONTMORENCY—A TEN YEARS' TRUCE.

WHEN Francis I. promised not to attack the Emperor during his expedition to Tunis, he reserved to himself full liberty of action against the Duke of Milan. Determined to avenge the death of Merveilles, he asked the Duke of Savoy to give him a free passage through his estates to Milan. This request being refused, Francis claimed the Duke's estates in right of his mother, Louise of Savoy, and recklessly gave orders for the invasion of Savoy and Piedmont. Both provinces, being incapable of defending themselves, surrendered without striking a blow. Meanwhile Sforza had died ; he was the last of his race, thus there was no one on whom to avenge the supposed infringement of international rights, and the succession to the Duchy became an open question. Francis at once put in his claim. Charles complained bitterly of his rival's conduct ;

but not being prepared to enter upon another war, he opened negotiations which would at least give him time to reorganize his army. He proposed to give the Duchy as a portion to one of his nieces, marrying her to Francis I.'s third son. The conference, which lasted through the winter, abruptly closed in the spring. The credulous Francis, ever ready to believe that what he desired would happen, recalled his army and left Piedmont in charge of the Marquis de Saluces, who betrayed his trust without compunction. The Emperor, having completed his preparations for war, then set out for Rome, where he was received in solemn audience by the Pope on 6th April, 1536. Charles openly explained his designs in a consistory, and lodged a formal charge against Francis, denouncing to all Europe his anti-christian policy, and renewing his empty challenge to *combat à outrance*. This speech, delivered in Spanish, filled his hearers with amazement.

The Emperor almost at once left Rome for Northern Italy. The Marquis de Saluces having already surrendered Piedmont to Antonio de Leyva, the French were in full retreat. Charles was about to pursue them beyond the Alps; but Francis hastily assembled an army to check the enemy's progress, and putting himself at its head, marched down the Rhone from Lyons to Valence. There a terrible sorrow overtook him.

The Dauphin had remained at Lyons ready to follow his father. Brantôme says he had not the brilliant qualities of Francis, but was of a staid, reserved disposition. His Spanish imprisonment had left a tinge of melancholy in his character; his dress was also sombre: he wore nothing but black, and was extremely sober, drinking water chiefly and avoiding excesses. He was accused of less austerity with regard to the fair sex; but Brantôme, who writes unreservedly on the subject, offers the following testimony :

‘I heard the ladies of that time say he was most respectful to them, treating them with marked deference, as he treated his mistress—one of the Queen’s maids-of-honour, of the Maumont family—my first cousin; she was a very virtuous and correct young girl, for princes choose their mistresses as much for their virtues as for other qualities.’

While waiting for his father’s commands at Lyons, the Dauphin went one day to play a game at tennis in the fields at Ainay. It was a sultry day in August. The Dauphin, overcome with heat, sent one of his pages for some water contained in a vase given him by Doña Agnèse Pacheco, one of Queen Eleanor’s maids-of-honour. The vase of Portuguese earthenware kept the water cool, at the same time imparting a quality supposed to prevent any evil effects from drinking it after violent exercise.

The page, Sebastian Montecuculli, filled the cup at the Ainay Well. The Dauphin, who drank its contents at a draught, was seized with illness suddenly, and died four days afterwards.

Great was the consternation when this news reached Valence. No one dared to break it to the King. At last Cardinal Jean de Lorraine undertook to fulfil the painful duty, as his oldest and most intimate friend. On entering the King's room his voice failed him, and he was otherwise so distressed that his Majesty had a presentiment that some ill had befallen his son, and inquired if there were any tidings of him. The Cardinal replied that he was ill, his condition serious : but that one must trust in God, and hope for his recovery.

'I understand,' said the King: 'you dare not tell me he is dead, so you say he will soon die.'

The Cardinal's silence and emotion confirmed the King's forebodings ; he uttered a cry of deep sorrow, approached the window to conceal his tears ; again a deep cry escaped him, and raising his hands towards Heaven, he exclaimed :

'My God, I know I must accept with patience whatever it may be Thy will to send me ! From Thee alone can I hope for resignation and strength. Make me to know Thy will, that I may not rebel against it; succour and strengthen my human weakness !'

There was nothing extraordinary in the death of the Dauphin after an act of such imprudence; but in those days suspicions of poison were ever rife, and the general belief was that the young prince had fallen a victim to some heinous conspiracy. Queen Eleanor, in spite of her devotion to the Dauphin, did not escape suspicion. Catherine de Medicis, even Clement VII. (who died a year before) were also suspected; but more than all Charles V. and his two generals, Antonio de Leyva and Ferdinand de Gonzaga, were charged with having paid Montecuculli to poison the water. The Spaniards were indignant at such absurd calumnies; nevertheless, the unfortunate Montecuculli was put to the torture, and in his anguish accused the Spaniards, as he would have accused his own father and mother, in order to shorten his sufferings.

Francis, despite his grief, was compelled to continue the war. Charles V. had crossed the Alps and planted his standard on French territory, and were he to gain a victory, nothing could stop him from advancing to the heart of France. It was the first time since Pavia that Francis had donned armour; he still winced at the thought of that defeat, and he was bowed down by his recent bereavement. It was, however, Montmorency's influence, which had increased greatly since the King's liberation, which was to control his decision on the present occasion.

Anne de Montmorency was two years the King's senior, he belonged to one of the oldest and most illustrious French families. Born at Chantilly in 1492, Queen Anne, after whom he was named, had been his sponsor. Educated at Amboise, he soon became one of the favourite companions of the young Count d'Angoulême. When Francis ascended the throne, Montmorency took his share of glory : he fought by his Sovereign's side at Marignan in 1520 ; he was entrusted with a mission to England, and on his return was promoted to a high post about the King's person. In 1521 he took part in the defence of Mezières, and afterwards joined in the Milanese campaign under Lautrec ; his bravery at the Bicoque won for him the grade of Marshal. When the Constable of Bourbon with the Imperialists invaded Provence, Montmorency repulsed and pursued them to the Alps. Taken prisoner at Pavia, and set free on parole, he took an active part in obtaining the King's liberation, and was appointed Grand Master and Governor of Languedoc in the same year.

In an age of heroism none was more heroic, more formidable to his adversaries, or more unsparing of himself than Montmorency ; he was tenacious and persevering rather than impulsive ; towards his troops he was a martinet, imperative and inexorably severe. For a word or a gesture he ordered death

or torture. No pleading could bend his stubborn will. The dread he inspired ensured his power in the army: but he was powerless to communicate enthusiasm to men who from simple soldiers might have become heroes, if commanded by a military genius. His career was marked by no brilliant feat; it was rather one unbroken series of disasters. He was not a man to take fortune by surprise, though by a stubborn resistance and by great sacrifices he sometimes obtained a smile from the fickle goddess. His attitude towards his inferiors was altogether wanting in dignity and self-respect.

A president on one occasion came to say something relative to his post. The weather was very hot: Montmorency took off his cap, and advancing towards his visitor, addressed him as follows:

‘M. le Président, say what you have to say, and put on your hat.’

‘Sir,’ replied he, ‘I will remain uncovered as long as you do.’

‘You are a fool, M. le Président,’ retorted Montmorency; ‘do you suppose I took off my cap for your sake? It was for my own convenience, my friend; the heat kills me. You fancy you are in your presidential chair here. Put on your hat if you choose, and speak.’ As the unfortunate magistrate could only mutter some inaudible words in his con-

fusion, ‘You are a fool, sir,’ continued the Constable; ‘go and learn your lesson.’

Montmorency was not only a warrior, he was an excellent man of business. Ambitious and greedy, he never had enough honours, posts, or money to satisfy himself and his many protégés—his six sons, his nephews, his friends, his hangers-on, or his servants. Honour was a thing apart from honesty in those days, and Montmorency was the most dishonest man of the Government. The will of M. de Châteaubriand is one witness among many of the truth of this.

When Brittany was united to France, it was agreed that great works of public utility, such, for instance, as the canal from Rennes to the sea, should be made as compensation to that province for the loss of its independence. The taxes levied in the Duchy were to be applied to this purpose. M. de Châteaubriand, Governor of the province, was charged to receive and distribute these funds. All the taxes had to be paid to him, and all payments disbursed from his coffers. The temptation was great for an unscrupulous and covetous nature, more especially as the accomplishment of the Canal project was replete with difficulties. Every tide washed away some part of the works, until little by little what was begun in earnest finished by being altogether abandoned. Nevertheless, the taxes continued to

pour in; but as there was no further outlay, they were amassed and filled the State coffers. Unfortunately, just then the Governor's castle and lands stood in need of improvements, and it is needless to say the money belonging to the State went to pay for them. Year after year the abuse continued, until the attention of La Pommeraye, Chief President of the Courts of Brittany, was called to the fact, and he apprised his master of it. M. de Châteaubriand was denounced to Anne de Montmorency, who at once laid his plans, persuading the King to take a tour of inspection in the provinces, to control the conduct of different Governors, and if necessary to oblige them to reimburse any funds illegally appropriated.

Brittany was the first province to be visited; the King halted on his way at Amboise, whence Montmorency sent a messenger to M. de Châteaubriand to apprise him secretly of his Majesty's arrival, and of the suspicions raised against him, which, if verified, would occasion his arrest and condemn him to repay the quadruple of the sums taken; and his posterity would always be held liable, according to the old proverb: ‘He who eats the King’s goose will have to restore its feathers a hundred years after.’

M. de Châteaubriand, as miserable a criminal as he was a husband, on receiving this message, was so alarmed that he wished himself dead. Mont-

morency arrived at Nantes almost immediately, whither Châteaubriand hastened to meet him, entreating him to stay with him and help him to put his affairs in order.

Montmorency, stern as ever, merely answered that 'he would not leave Brittany without paying the Governor a visit.' At the same time he ordered all the tax-collectors of Brittany to come to him at Nantes, as he was empowered to control the finances for the King's service for the past ten years, and to judge of any abuses that might have been perpetrated.

After pronouncing this order in a loud and majestic tone, Montmorency withdrew. Châteaubriand thought himself irretrievably lost; but, nevertheless, asked for a private audience of the Constable, which was granted with great difficulty. Early the next morning, in company with La Pommeraye, the three held a conference of several hours, after which they all went to Châteaubriand, where they feasted right jovially while the notary prepared an act by which M. de Châteaubriand bequeathed to the Constable, not only his domain of Châteaubriand, but ten other estates, with titles attached in Anjou and Brittany, estimated at fifteen hundred thousand livres of that date, representing ten or twelve times that amount at the present time. When the act was signed, Montmorency sent his

secretary to the King with the most flattering praise of Châteaubriand, saying that in all France no province could be better administered than that of Brittany.

Thus deceived, Francis despatched Berthureau, the Constable's secretary, with his sign-manual, giving a full quittance of all sums received by M. de Châteaubriand, and exonerating him and his descendants from any further claims in the matter. M. de Châteaubriand never recovered from the shock, but died two years after, at the age of fifty-six.

Montmorency's curious notions of honesty did not prevent him from being very devout, only he suited his faith to his inclinations, not his inclinations to his faith. According to his tenets, the chief object of the Sovereign Lord of Heaven was to uphold the power of the sovereigns of the earth, and God was the source and centre of despotic authority. His religion found expression in outward observances, such as fasting on Fridays, saying his prayers night and morning, whether at home or in the camp, at peace or in war; but behind them lurked a spirit of persecution. This semblance of piety did not escape the criticism of those who knew him, and who could scarcely respect prayers interrupted by such orders as the following: ‘Go and hang that man!’ ‘Bind that one to a tree!’ ‘Shoot another instantly!’ ‘Make mincemeat of those rascals who dared hold a

steeple in defiance of the King!' 'Burn that village, and set fire to everything a quarter of a league round it!' And all this did not interfere with his taking up his pater-nosters, without omitting a syllable, deeming it a great sin to put off his prayers to a more convenient season.

The austerity of his manners, which was proverbial, proceeded rather from indifference than from virtue. Brantôme, however, pretends that he was not invulnerable to Cupid's darts. Mademoiselle de Limeuil, who afterwards captivated Condé's heart, made a serious impression on Montmorency. She was one of the most beautiful and the wittiest maidens at Court, and was never at a loss for a smart reply or a witty word. One day Montmorency met her in the streets of Rouen, and offered to accompany her on horseback, addressing her as his mistress. Mademoiselle de Limeuil was not disposed to be amiable, and plainly intimated she would prefer to dispense with his company.

'So be it, my mistress,' he rejoined; 'I will leave you; but the rebuff is severe.'

'It is but just,' said the lady, 'that some one should snub you, since you pass your life in snubbing others.'

'Adieu, my *mistress*,' he repeated; 'you have certainly proved yourself to be mine.'

It would not be easy to conceive two natures

more opposite than those of Francis I. and Montmorency. It was precisely this contrast that gave the latter so much empire over the King. Francis had no aptitude for business, whereas Montmorency was the best administrator of the kingdom. Member of the Council, he frequently presided at it, and his word was decisive. In finance he was thoroughly master of his subject, simplifying each point by his clear and prompt solutions. No task was beyond his assiduity and love of work. The secretaries of his different offices gave him a daily report of their service, and often he would dictate his orders to three of them simultaneously.

When Francis I. was puzzled what to do and how to act, he invariably called Montmorency to his aid. He came with his superb air, his haughty, authoritative manner, treated the matter as a mere nothing, and set everything right in the twinkling of an eye. Extremely jealous of his power, he insisted that all petitions, pardons, favours, and offices should pass through his hands. He allowed no one to approach the Sovereign save through his mediation. His harsh, haughty manner inspired terror to all who came in contact with him. The only means of conciliating him was by an exaggerated flattery and humility amounting to cringing; and it must be confessed the courtiers were not slow in adopting this mode of approach.

The French army, recruited, refreshed, was now quite equal to take the field against the Imperialists; and no one but Montmorency would have dreamt of the cruel measure he adopted—nothing less than the systematic devastation of Provence. To arrest the enemy's march by famine, villages were burnt, forage and food destroyed or carried away, and if the poor inhabitants resisted or expostulated, they were treated as enemies. At Aix, for instance, the wine-butts were stove in, the cellars, mills, and mill-stones destroyed, the ovens carried away, and the people sent to the camp and pressed into the service. Numbers who sought refuge in the woods and hills perished of cold and hunger. The fields were strewn with dead bodies, some clasped in a last embrace. The very atmosphere was infected. Whole towns were ransacked and ruined—at Grasse, Digne, Antibes, Draguignan, Toulon; elsewhere not one stone was left upon another.

These Draconian measures had the desired effect. The Imperialists, in presence of a land stripped of all resources, retired, making an attack on Marseilles, where they were repulsed. Charles hastily returned to Aix, in which ancient capital he wished to be crowned King of Provence; but owing to the absence of the nobility, the clergy, and the Parliament, who had fled, this was impossible. His troops, moreover, were rapidly wasting by an epidemic pro-

duced by famine. Antonio de Leyva was taken; but before his death he urged his master so strongly to give up this disastrous campaign, that Charles at length decided to return to Italy. The greater number of his soldiers died on the way; and when the Emperor arrived at Genoa to embark for Spain, there was no longer even the remnant of an army. Montmorency has been blamed for not attempting to cut off his passage and to take him prisoner, but Montmorency was not the man to run any risk.

This campaign ended, war next broke out in the North of France and in Piedmont, which the French tried to recapture—a war of confused marches and counter-marches—towns taken and retaken, without any decisive success on either side. Francis, ever hankering after the Duchy of Milan, in vain tried to conciliate the Italian Princes, who remembered how dearly they had paid for their former alliance; even the Venetians deserted him, and offered their fleet to the Emperor.

In this extremity, Soliman again came to save France! Francis's special ambassador, La Forêt, on arriving in Asia, found the Sultan absorbed in his expedition against Persia. Nevertheless, the French envoy was received with the greatest courtesy, and returned with Soliman to Constantinople, where he signed, in February, 1536, the first written treaty of alliance and friendship between Turkey and France.

It was stipulated that Barbarossa should recommence his depredations on the coasts of South Italy, whilst the combined fleets of France and Turkey should besiege Corfu—the Crescent and the Cross fighting in the same cause. Francis I. was to take advantage of this moment to occupy the North of Italy ; but a cry of horror and indignation was raised against him in Europe ; the Pope reproached him so severely that he was forced to desert his ally, and to leave his promises unfulfilled. The Sultan recalled his fleet, and again marched into Hungary, where he gained the famous battle of Esseck, December 31, 1537. This diversion, which detained the Imperial army in Germany, allowed Francis to take possession of Piedmont once more. The joint entreaties of the Queen of Hungary and Queen Eleanor succeeded in obtaining first the truce of Bomby for the Netherlands, and afterwards that of Monçon for Italy. The Pope adjured the two rival Princes, for conscience' sake, and in the interests of Christianity, to come to an understanding, and parleyings to this effect were protracted throughout the winter, but led to no result. Paul III. then determined to take the matter in hand. He convened the Princes to meet him at Nice, and announced his intention to preside in person at their conference.

CHAPTER XIV.

INTERVIEW AT NICE AND AIGUES-MORTES—TEN YEARS'
TRUCE—POLITICAL OSCILLATIONS—LAST WARS.

NICE was the only fragment of territory that the unfortunate Duke of Savoy could still call his own. He occupied the castle, an almost impregnable fortress, and resolved to retain possession of this retreat, at least. Invited to lend it for the interview, both by the Emperor and the Pope, he flatly refused, and Paul III. was forced to take up his quarters in the Convent of St. Francis, whilst the Emperor stayed at Villafranca and the King at Villeneuve.

The antipathy between the two sovereigns was so violent that they refused to see each other. The Pope acted as mediator during the whole negotiations, whilst Queen Eleanor passed from her husband to her brother in the hope of succeeding in bringing about the desired reconciliation.

An amusing incident occurred during these repeated journeyings to and from Villeneuve and

Villafranca. A bridge had been thrown from the Imperial galleys to the shore, to avoid embarking in a small boat. One day, as the Queen was going to see her brother, he met her midway, with the Dukes of Savoy and Mantua and some Spanish nobles. Beneath this imposing burden the frail bridge gave way, and all fell into the water. Fortunately it was not deep enough to be dangerous, but all the party were wet through. After changing their clothes, the incident was a source of laughter and fun, those who had been the least wet making fun of those who had received a complete bath.

The negotiations between the two sovereigns were slow and laborious. Charles was seriously desirous for peace. Threatened by Turkey, hampered by the German Protestants, who refused to participate in war unless at the price of great concessions, detested in Italy, where his soldiers lived on plunder and rapine, he was assailed on all sides by murmuring and discontent ; even Spain rebelled against further taxation, and the Netherlands were in a state of fermentation bordering on revolt. The Regent's authority was openly attacked, and a clamour for independence had been raised at Ghent, where an appeal for help to France was even mooted. The Emperor's position was critical, but his tenacity of purpose stood him in good stead : he refused absolutely to concede anything under pressure.

Francis, on the other hand, was in an exceptionally favourable position—he had but to fold his arms and patiently await the inevitable dissolution of the Empire to triumph over Charles. Several distinguished and patriotic prelates encouraged the King to remain faithful to his Turkish ally. For so long as the Emperor saw France isolated, he would maintain his haughty, intractable bearing ; whereas were Francis to follow up, and profit by his advantages, this would compel his foe to conclude favourable conditions of peace. Francis, ever versatile and vacillating, turned a deaf ear to this sage counsel. The reproaches of the Pontiff on his sacrilegious alliance filled his conscience with remorse ; so, after having borne the odium of an alliance with Turkey, he gave it up just when he might have reaped some benefit from it.

Montmorency encouraged him in this policy. Charles had always exercised a fascination over the Constable from a certain similarity of character. Both were haughty, despotic, and imbued with a spirit of persecution. ‘The Grand Master,’ wrote Marino Giustiniani in 1535, ‘was always for peace with the Emperor, and never would form any alliance with the German Protestant Princes.’

It being impossible to arrive at an understanding for a definite peace, the monarchs ended by signing a ten years’ truce on the 18th June, 1538, after which they

separated, and met on the most affectionate footing in less than a month at Aigues-Mortes. Some historians have erroneously attributed this interview to chance. On the contrary, it seems to have been preconcerted by Montmorency and Queen Eleanor. Orders had been sent to the French fleet in the Levant to join the Imperial fleet in the Gulf of Genoa, and escort the Emperor to Aigues-Mortes, where the King had already taken up his quarters in a monastery near the town. So soon as Charles's approach was announced, Francis mounted his horse, rode to the port, embarked in a boat with the Cardinal de Lorraine and other nobles, and was rowed to the Imperial galley. The Emperor gave him his hand to board the vessel, and Francis, smiling, said :

‘Brother, behold me once more your prisoner !’

The usual compliments were exchanged, and the Emperor presented the chief officers to Francis. Among the number was Andrea Doria, who it may be remembered had quitted the French fleet, and was now Lord High Admiral of the Imperial navy.

The Emperor returned the King’s visit the next day. Two of the best houses in the town had been chosen for the residence of the sovereigns : the King lodged in that of M. de la Garde ; the Emperor in one belonging to M. Archambaud de la Rivoire, who recorded the interview as follows :

‘Charles landed on the bridge, where the King and Queen were waiting for him; they embraced each other with effusion; the Queen kissed first one and then the other. Overjoyed at this meeting, the crowd shouted, “God save the King!” “God save the Emperor!” a royal salute being fired at the same time. On entering the town the Dauphin and the Duke of Orleans came up, booted and spurred, having ridden from Provence. Both monarchs greeted them affectionately; then the King took the Emperor by the arm and led him to M. de la Garde’s house, where in a spacious hall a sumptuous dinner was prepared, to which a brilliant company had been invited.

‘The two houses communicated by a bridge thrown from the roofs. The dinner over, the King and Queen escorted the Emperor to my house, and left him in the apartment prepared for him. There was a magnificent bed, on which the Emperor threw himself, and rested for about an hour. The Queen then knocked at the door, and was instantly admitted; she sent Montpezat to tell the King that her brother was awake. The King came with one or two nobles of his suite, and found the Emperor still recumbent, talking with his sister, who sat by the bedside. As soon as the Emperor saw Francis he sprang on his feet without his shoes, and went to greet him. Francis said :

“How are you now, my brother? Have you rested well?”

The Emperor answered that he had feasted so freely that he would fain have slept longer. The King was profuse in amiable expressions, assuring the Emperor he was as much master in his kingdom as in Spain or in Flanders, and then begged his acceptance of a diamond ring valued at thirty thousand crowns, and on which was engraved, “*Dilectionis testis et exemplum.*” Charles put it on his finger, thanking Francis, and adding:

“Brother, I have no means of retaliating save this,” and taking the collar of the order which he wore, he put it round the King’s neck.

Francis in his turn thanked the Emperor, and said:

“Since it is your good pleasure that I should wear your order, may it please you to wear mine;” thus the exchange of collars was made, and they kissed each other repeatedly. Wine was called for, and everyone took leave except M. de Granvelle and the Commandant, on the Emperor’s side; the Queen, the Constable, and the Cardinal of Lorraine on the King’s side—seven persons in all. The conference lasted a long time, peace was concluded, and all went to have supper together. After supper the ladies repeatedly kissed each other for joy; the Queen then went herself to see that the Emperor’s

room was in order, and returned to fetch him, accompanying him to the door, where she bade him good-night.

'The next morning (Tuesday) the King entered the Emperor's room, and thence the whole Court proceeded to hear Mass in the hall on the ground-floor of my house; there was a very fine musical service, and then they went to dinner. The rest of the day was spent in rejoicings. All the ladies of the Court were there : Catherine de Medicis, wife of the Dauphin ; the Queen of Navarre ; the Duchesse d'Etampes.'

Both on land and water the fêtes were splendid. Each gentleman on horseback had a lady on the crupper ; they chatted and laughed, and were in high spirits. The brightest, happiest of all was Queen Eleanor, escorted by her husband and her brother ; her merry laugh rang through the air, and at every moment she compelled the two sovereigns to kiss each other, encircled by her arms. The accusations and the threats, the anger and hatred, of bygone days, seemed to be utterly forgotten.

Francis's feelings were always evanescent, and it is possible that at the moment he was quite in earnest ; but Charles, in his heart, must have looked upon it all as a comedy.

The adieux were at length made, Francis accompanying the Emperor back to his galley, and the

next day setting off to return to the centre of his own kingdom.

Politics now entered upon a new phase. Francis fell ill; Montmorency governed in his stead. The sceptical and lettered Popes had passed away; Paul III., who had succeeded the Medicis on the pontifical throne, was a man of a narrow and fanatical disposition. He was occupied at this time in calling a council to crush the Reformers; meanwhile he recognised the Jesuits (15th September, 1540), who were prepared to use all and every means for their conversion.

Francis had entered into secret engagements with Charles in the same spirit, and on the 10th December, 1540, an inquisitor converted to Protestantism was burnt at Toulouse. At the same time an edict was promulgated, threatening heretics with the severest measures. In the provinces executions followed on executions, with more or less cruelty, according to the character of the local authorities. One of the most atrocious acts of fiendish zeal was the order of the Parliament of Provence to destroy the villages of Mérindole, Cabrières, Aigues, and other asylums of the heretics. Men were massacred, women and children banished, houses demolished, and trees uprooted. The Chancellor Poyet (a creature of Louise) and Montmorency encouraged these cruelties.

External policy also took a fresh direction : England stood aloof ; German Protestants were indignant and deserted France. Soliman, astonished that his ally, the King, should not inform him of the signature of the truce, naturally placed no further reliance on him. French envoys, accustomed to combat Imperial influence on every possible occasion, were perplexed and disconcerted on receiving Montmorency's order to uphold it. Their letters betray their embarrassment and distrust. Finally, what was passing in Flanders aggravated the situation to the utmost.

The Netherlands were in a state of agitation, Charles having declared his intention of levying a tax at Ghent without consulting Parliament. The burghers sturdily refused to pay it. Marguerite, the Regent, ordered the arrest of some of the principal citizens, to be held as hostages. The populace took up arms, drove away the nobility, made the Imperial officers prisoners, and besought the protection of the King of France, who still bore the title of Liege Lord, although the Treaty of Cambray had deprived him of the suzerainty. Francis was ill when the petition arrived ; he not only rejected it, but revealed the offer to the Emperor, gave up the secret correspondence to him, and granted to the Imperial troops a passage through France to Flanders.

Montmorency's influence was but too evident.

In the autumn of 1539 the Emperor had arrived as a friend on the French frontier; the King was unable to go to meet him, but was represented by the Constable de Montmorency and the two princes, who received him at Bayonne. The King awaited his guest at Chatellerault; Charles travelled slowly, amusing himself by hunting on the way. The towns gave him magnificent receptions. The French nobility flocked to escort him. He was met at Pontoise by five hundred gentlemen and two thousand citizens, divided into six companies. At Orleans he was greeted by four hundred and fifty gentlemen, all the provincial militia, and ninety young tradesmen of the town, well mounted, wearing black velvet jackets, white satin doublets with gold buttons, velvet caps covered with gold embroidery and precious stones, white morocco buskins, all pinked, gold spurs, and firearms at their saddle-bows. Each had over two thousand crowns' worth of rings on his fingers, and a single cap was valued at the same price.

At Chatellerault Francis studied how best to do honour to his guest; thence the two sovereigns journeyed together to Paris and made a solemn entry on the 1st January, 1540. An amnesty to all prisoners was granted in honour of his Imperial Majesty. A week was spent in festivities and rejoicings, during which Charles Quint visited the

Constable in his splendid residence of Chantilly. In this way the Emperor whiled away three months in France. On leaving, he bade adieu to his royal brother-in-law with demonstrations of affection and promises of goodwill.

All allusion to politics had been courteously avoided during the Imperial sojourn; some vague words, however, sufficed to raise the King's hopes that in a moment of gushing friendship and gratitude the Emperor would restore Milan to him. Charles Quint warily gave no hint on the subject; he subjugated Flanders, and on his return offered by way of concession to give an Archduchess, his daughter or his niece, in marriage to the second son of Francis, the Duke of Orleans offering Milan, Flanders, and Burgundy as the dower and appanage respectively of the young couple.

This proposal involved not only a dismemberment of France, but it would inevitably have caused a feud between the two brothers. The King at once foresaw this result, and refused the perfidious proposal. Charles, surprised, handed over the Duchy of Milan to his son Philip, and so filled Francis's cup of indignation to the brim. The old bitternesses and grievances were revived, and Montmorency's disgrace began.

After the signature of the truce, La Forêt having died in the East, the King despatched another

ambassador to Constantinople to offer explanations to the Sultan, and to beg him to be a party to the truce. Rinçon, a clever diplomatist, succeeded in wooing back Soliman to the King, but happily could not induce him to subscribe to the truce, for, on the ambassador's return to France in 1541, the aspect of affairs had totally changed, and Francis asked for nothing better than to have Soliman's support in a fresh war. Rinçon was accordingly despatched on a second mission, in complete contradiction to the first. However, it was fated that he was not to reach his destination. As he was crossing through Lombardy in company with the Venetian Fregose, they both fell into an ambuscade, laid by the Marquis de Guest, by order of the Emperor, and were murdered.

Francis's wrath was roused by this crime. The Pope tried in vain to moderate the spirit of enmity between the two rivals. Charles haughtily denounced Francis as the ally of Moslems, and accused him of having drawn the Turks into Europe. The King, more than ever irritated, pursued his plans; he replaced Rinçon by the adventurer Paulin de la Garde, and sent him as ambassador to Soliman, whom he found established at Buda-Pesth, after his victory over Ferdinand. La Garde persuaded him to join the King in a maritime attack on Italy and Spain. Montmorency being disgraced and dismissed from power in France, Admiral d'Annebault and the Car-

dinal de Tournon were placed at the head of the Government. Overtures of alliance were made to the Protestants. Confidence once betrayed, however, is not easily regained. Nothing would tempt Henry VIII. to forsake Charles; whilst the German Protestants reproached Francis bitterly for his religious persecutions, and held themselves aloof. In order to restore their confidence, the King forthwith forbade religious persecutions and tortures. Royal letters of pardon were sent to the most influential Huguenots, and Jeanne d'Albret, the King's niece, was married to the Protestant Duke of Gueldre. This step produced the desired result. The German Protestant Princes renewed their alliance, and for the first time the Kings of Sweden and Denmark espoused the cause of Francis against the Emperor, promising the help of their fleets, and a contingent of men-at-arms.

While these negotiations were going on, Charles was occupied in a second African expedition directed against Algiers. He set sail from Spain on the 17th October, 1541, and on the 20th, at dawn, was in sight of the coast of Barbary. In the afternoon the fleet cast anchor within gunshot of Algiers. Stress of weather, however, obliged them to raise anchor, and the wind drove them again to the mainland. Storms and tempests continued to disable their guns and damage their ships, and on the

1st December, as they could no longer wage war with the elements, they steered back, and landed at Cartagena, and the Emperor passed the remainder of the winter in Spain.

As soon as the winter was over, Francis declared war on the 20th May, 1542. Hostilities were begun simultaneously in the north and in the south. M. de Guise and the Duke of Orleans commanded the northern corps; in the south the King and the Dauphin placed themselves at the head of the troops. Fortune favoured neither of the antagonists decisively. In the autumn, the King on his return from Roussillon found his subjects on the coast were in revolt.

La Rochelle was an important commercial seaport. In times of peace it had become wealthy and prosperous under very ancient municipal liberties, which rendered it, in some sort, a small republic, governed by a council composed of a hundred citizens, elected by the people. The *échevins*, or sheriffs, were nominated by the council. To them was entrusted the care of the city walls, and they acquitted themselves well. No soldier could enter without their permission.

Charles de Jabot, Sire de Jarnac, governor of Aulnis, took umbrage at this prosperous independence, and taking advantage of a slight disagreement between the burghers, he dissolved the council and dismissed the sheriffs in office, appointing

others himself. The citizens naturally rebelled against this summary abolition of their traditional rights, whereupon Chabot obtained the King's leave to establish a garrison of three hundred free-lances in the town, where they conducted themselves with the most overbearing insolence. The burghers were thus spurred to open revolt. Chabot, to avoid bloodshed, consented to clear the town of his adventurers, provided the citizens would lay down their arms until the King arrived.

An increase of the tax on salt unfortunately complicated matters. The whole coast was ready to rise up against this exaction ; the King's commissioners were driven away. On his Majesty's approach a deputation was sent to assure him of the loyalty of his subjects ; but Francis, in a rage, refused to listen to them, had them loaded with irons, and made them march before him with the deputies of the islands and the coast. The poor terrified populations hoped to obtain a mitigation of their King's wrath by multiplying prayers and processions.

On the 31st December Francis made his entry into La Rochelle. An amphitheatre was raised in the principal square ; he ascended the steps in regal attire, followed by his lords, cardinals, and princes. The criminals were grouped in the square and in the streets—on one side, those belonging to the islands and the coast ; on the other, the towns-

people. A dead silence reigned. The two advocates whose duty it was to plead for the criminals abstained from any argument in their favour, merely imploring mercy and pardon for their offences, committed rather from thoughtlessness than from malice prepense.

Scarcely was this appeal ended, when the citizens fell on their knees, raising their hands in supplication, and crying aloud, ‘Mercy! mercy!’ The King’s wrath gave way to a better emotion at this touching spectacle. He assured them of his forgiveness, and that all was forgotten, and then and there restored their confiscated arms, ordered the obnoxious garrison to withdraw, and after a paternal exhortation, further to convince them of his confidence and goodwill, he went to sup with the municipal magistrates. From the depths of anguish, these impressionable people gave themselves up to exuberant joy. The church-bells, that had been silent for three days, rang out merrily once more.

Another instance of those good impulses that made it easy to forgive Francis everything was shown when the master of artillery, Galiot de Genouillac, was accused of embezzling State funds. He had served under Charles VIII. and Louis XII. At seventy-six he had resigned his office, and retired to his magnificent Château d’Acier, there to end his days in peace.

At the instigation of his courtiers, Francis sent for the aged veteran, asking him, with an air of suspicion, in what way he had acquired his fortune.

Genouillac replied : ‘ I was born poor ; all I now possess was acquired while I was in high office, by royal favour, and also by marriages with two heiresses, both marriages having been arranged and sanctioned by the King. In a word,’ he added, ‘ all my possessions I owe to you. You gave them to me of your own free will, and you can take from me what you gave. I am willing to give up all to you. As to any pilfering, you may behead me if ever I was guilty of dishonesty.’

The King, moved by this loyal declaration, replied :

‘ Yes, my good friend, what you say is true. I will neither reproach you nor rob you of what I have given you. You offer to restore it to me, but I confirm my gifts with all my heart. Continue to love and serve me as you have always done, and you will always find me a good King to you.’

In the spring of 1543 the young Duke d’Enghien (Francis de Bourbon) was sent to the South at the head of a small army, whilst Barbarossa left Constantinople with the Turkish fleet. The latter devastated the Neapolitan coast on his way to Marseilles, where he anchored at the beginning of July, and on the 10th August the French and the

Turks besieged Nice. The town speedily surrendered, but the citadel held out until it was relieved by the arrival of the Spaniards, who obliged the allies to beat a retreat. The Turks wintered at Toulon, their presence raising such a storm of anger in Europe against Francis that he was obliged in the spring to request them to return whence they came. To palliate this proceeding to Soliman, the Prior of Capua, Leon Strozzi, was deputed to accompany the Turkish fleet with a squadron of honour, and to make known the King's political motives to the Porte.

After the Turks had departed, the Duke d'Enghien won a brilliant victory over the Imperialists at Cérisoles on the 13th April, 1544, and was on the eve of entering Lombardy as conqueror, when the King, after a disastrous defeat in the North, summoned the Duke and his army to guard the frontier. All the allies deserted him.

During the first period of the Reformation, its inveterate enemies being the Pope and the Emperor, the Protestants were disposed to look favourably on the Turks. Luther even declared that God made use of Mussulmans to scourge Christians, and therefore they should be accepted as a scourge sent from Heaven. When, however, Charles granted certain concessions to the Huguenots as a recompense for their support against Soliman, Luther changed his

views, and dedicated his new thesis to the Landgrave of Hesse. From that date Protestants joined Catholics in a hue and cry against Mussulmans. When the Kings of Denmark and Sweden heard that Turks had been called to French coasts by the French King, with one accord they recalled their troops. The Imperialists and the English took advantage of their retreat to renew their attacks; Henry VIII. laid siege to Boulogne, Charles took Dizier, 10th August, and then marched without let or hindrance to Epernay, Château-Thierry, Villers-Cotterets, and Soissons.

No words can describe the panic of the Parisians when they heard the enemy was so near their city. Paradin gives a pathetic account of their terror. When it was known that the Emperor's vanguard was at Meaux, the fright was so great that everyone thought only of his personal safety. Never since the town existed had such a tumult, such terror, been seen within its walls. Rich and poor, great and small, people of every grade and age, dragging their children after them, carrying old men on their backs, and securing what furniture and chattels they could, took flight, some by water, some by land. The river was covered with boats, so overloaded with goods and passengers that many sank with their cargoes.

The confusion was not less in the country round

Paris : crowds of men, women, children, horses, oxen, cows, sheep, and other animals were rushing along in despair, howling, neighing, lowing, bleating, making such a noise that one might fancy the four elements had been let loose, and that the world was falling into chaos.

When the King, who was far from well, learnt the fall of St. Dizier, he exclaimed before the Queen of Navarre and other ladies who were with him, ‘Oh ! God, Thou makest me pay a heavy price for the kingdom which I believed Thou gavest me willingly ! Nevertheless, Thy will be done.’ Then, turning to the Queen, ‘My darling !’ he said, ‘go you to the church, and there pray God for me.’

His courage revived when he left for Paris. On reaching the capital, he called a meeting of the trades’ guilds, of whom there were forty thousand, well-armed, and to their care he committed the city.

‘I cannot prevent the Parisians from being frightened,’ he said, ‘but I can prevent them from being hurt, and I will die in defending them rather than live without saving them.’

The resolute attitude of the King reassured the people, and caused Charles to hesitate, peace being then essential to him, as the Turks were marching against Vienna. Francis at first demurred to the hard conditions offered by the Emperor ; but when the news of the capitulation of Boulogne, taken by

the English, reached him, he consented to sign the Treaty of Crespy, on the 18th September, 1544. The French frontiers were to be left untouched, but the King, like a penitent sinner, was to break off his alliance with infidels and heretics, against whom he consented to take up arms conjointly with the Emperor. At the same time, he gave in on the question of the appanage. Burgundy was to be given to the Duke of Orleans, Milan to a Princess of the Imperial family, and the marriage was to be celebrated shortly.

The Dauphin, when ordered by his father to sign this dangerous treaty, protested privately that he only acted out of obedience to his father, and without any intention of carrying out its stipulations. The death of the Duke of Orleans, however, in the following year, brought about another solution. Francis, meanwhile, signed a separate treaty of peace with England, leaving Boulogne in possession of the English, where, according to Paradin, they were guilty of outrageous cruelties.

After these events, the King's impaired health obliged him to relinquish an active share in the government, and he left it entirely to the Cardinal de Tournon, who was only a degree less fanatic than Montmorency. Religious persecutions were revived, and assumed the proportions of wholesale massacres in the South. Francis's signature and

sanction for these monstrosities were, so to speak, wrenched from him. Even Protestant writers exonerate him from willing participation. The President Oppede, in Provence, superintended the devastation of the country and the massacre of the inhabitants—old men, women, and children, none were spared.

All plans relative to the Duchy of Milan having fallen through on the death of the Duke of Orleans, Francis, ill as he was, again put forward his pretensions, and sent Annebault to open negotiations with the Emperor; but without success.

Frustrated in his hopes, Francis's politics again veered round. During the interval of peace, Charles Quint and Francis had sent ambassadors to Soliman, to solicit from him a truce. Francis now despatched another ambassador to the Sultan, asking him to renew hostilities; and, in order to win back Protestant concurrence, he again decreed a relaxation from persecution.

This enterprise was never to be realized. The King's malady was making rapid progress, whilst death was busy even among the youngest members of his family. After the Duke of Orleans, it was the hero of Cérisoles, killed by an accident, whom he had to bewail.

'In the month of February, 1545,' says Martin du Bellage, 'the King was staying at La Roche-Guyon.

There had been a heavy fall of snow, and the young nobles engaged in a battle of snowballs ; one party storming the house, which the other defended. Whilst the Duke d'Enghien (Francis de Bourbon) was making a sortie from the besieged place, a careless companion threw a linen-chest out of the window, which, falling on the Duke's head, wounded him mortally.'

Soon after, Henry VIII. was also taken. He and the King were the same age ; their reigns began at the same time, and, whether in peace or at war, they always retained a certain liking for each other. Henry's death, which seemed like a presage of his own, affected Francis deeply.

CHAPTER XV.

SAD CLOSE OF THE REIGN.

THERE are persons who ought never to grow old, because they learn nothing from life, and because those qualities that are so charming in youth seem out of place in riper years, when not balanced by an increase of wisdom.

No reign ever began under more favourable auspices than that of Francis I., none ever closed in such sad humiliation. The Prince, who had once been young, handsome, intelligent, heroic, a creature of impulse, full of generosity and valour, became, before he had reached the age of fifty, a morose old man, irritable and resentful, his constitution ruined by the effects of self-indulgence; his character debased by bitter and unjust sentiments. At the age of forty-two, soon after signing the truce, he was attacked by a terrible disease, and since then he had declined day by day.

A hideous puffiness disfiguring his body, and a

series of abscesses scarring his face, ultimately developed an organic affection. This once insatiable warrior, this keen sportsman, so ardent in the pursuit of game that he used to say, if he were old or sick, ‘he would be carried to the chase, and when he was dead he would perhaps go in his coffin,’ had now become so infirm, that he was forced to remain in his palace, and at times was unable to move.

This once brilliant and eloquent speaker (to whose conversation not only artists listened with profit and delight, but, as Hubert Thomas says, ‘even gardeners and labourers’) had lost his palate, and his once facile, rapid delivery was now laboured and faltering. He was conscious of his own decadence, and watched his change day by day. On all sides sorrows, trials, and deceptions multiplied. After thirty years of obstinate and ruinous war a shameful peace concluded his military career. His Italian dream had vanished in thin air, and he had preserved the frontiers with difficulty. His mortal enemy had got the upper hand of his own kingdom. His friends and family embittered his life by their quarrels and jealousies. Montmorency and Chabot, the companions of his boyish days at Amboise, the intimate friends of his manhood, now regarded each other with dire hatred.

Chabot’s character had no point in common with Montmorency; he was expansive, brilliant, light-

hearted, a lover of pleasure and luxury, withal a courageous soldier, who had distinguished himself in North Italy, and specially at Marseilles during Bourbon's siege of that town. He had been appointed Admiral of the Fleet and afterwards Lieutenant-General of Piedmont, but never thought of vying with the ambitious Montmorency. Navagero tells us, 'The Admiral has great authority with the King. If he would take part in State affairs he certainly would manage them all; but he has not sufficient energy for it, and prefers to remain what he is instead of incurring heavier responsibilities.' Moreover, Chabot was ignorant of the courtly art of flattery and subordination; he retained at Court the familiar tone contracted in his youth. The King's cordial nature took no offence at this, but the proud Montmorency could not endure it. Chabot took no notice of the haughty airs of the Constable, and this decided his rival to ruin him. Montmorency represented to the King Chabot's wild extravagance at a time when the country was reduced to misery. He then pointed out the military errors he had committed when in command in the army, calling his intentions in question. Francis suffered himself to be led away by these false representations, and one day in a moment of irritation reproached Chabot with his extravagant luxury. He answered that all he spent was his own. Proceedings might be taken

against him : he had nothing to fear either for his life or his honour.

Montmorency represented these words as mere bravado. Poyet, his tool, began forthwith an inquiry, and five months later Chabot was arraigned before the Criminal Court, and imprisoned in the Fort of Melun. To Francis's shame he himself bore witness against his friend. Administrative disorder had reached such a pitch that nothing was easier than to ruin a man by accusing him of malversation ; but, in spite of all the ingenuity displayed, no proofs were found against Chabot. He was, nevertheless, banished from the kingdom, and condemned to pay fines amounting to actual confiscation of his fortune. Happily he had for his friend Madame d'Etampes, who obtained his pardon and the restitution of his estates. The King, on handing him the letters annulling the verdict, asked him if he felt quite sure of his innocence. Chabot answered : 'I have learnt in prison that no man has a right to boast of his innocence to his King any more than to his God.'

The Admiral, nevertheless, was so much affected on hearing the sentence pronounced against him, 'that he lost his pulse,' says Brantôme, and 'never recovered it ;' he died a few months after.

Montmorency did not long enjoy his triumph ; his disgrace followed on the heels of that he had plotted

for Chabot. He left the Court on the failure of the Imperial policy in 1541, and did not appear there again until after the King's death. No suit was instituted against him; but his creature, Poyet, suffered in his stead. Convicted of malversation, he was imprisoned for three years, and his fortune confiscated. Francis was indignant at this mild verdict; he interfered personally in the affair, and wished the culprit to be condemned to death.

The King's family trials were still more severe; by his first wife, the gentle Queen Claude, who had died at Amboise during the Italian campaign in 1524, he had seven children. She was so unobtrusive and so meek that she occupies a very small space in history. Brantôme says, 'Madame la Régente was very harsh towards her, but her patience and amiable spirit gave her strength to bear it. Good and pious as was this princess, she had but little influence;' and yet she was titular Duchess of Brittany, daughter and wife of a king; but what between her brilliant impetuous spouse and her imperious irascible mother-in-law, there was no peace for her but in passive abnegation. In this world it goes hardly for those who do not know how to defend themselves.

Francis's second wife was his enemy's sister, a fact which he never lost sight of, any more than he forgot the circumstances of their sad betrothal.

Two of the King's daughters died in childhood; a

third in the flower of her age, just after her marriage with the King of Scotland. One only survived, Margot, the image of her aunt, the Queen of Navarre, as amiable and intellectual as she was ; but she had to wait twelve years, until the end of the war, before she married the Duke of Savoy, at the moment of her brother Henry II.'s tragical death.

Francis's three sons were his pride, his delight, his ambition. The eldest died at twenty, through a fatal imprudence ; the two others were estranged by a bitter jealousy. The new Dauphin resembled his lost brother ; they were both ‘morose as Spaniards,’ of slow intelligence, cold in manner, quiet and staid—the very opposite of the King. Whereas the Duke of Orleans, Brantôme tells us, ‘was as hasty and impetuous as his father, and delighted in any valorous deed ; he was, too, the handsomest of the three, had a frank, open countenance like Francis, and a fair complexion. He was full of high spirits, amusing, and courteous. Small-pox had injured one of his eyes, but the defect was not perceptible.’

The story ran, that about the time of his birth the King happened to be at Langres, in the cathedral where the bodies of the three Hebrew saints—Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego—were supposed to be preserved. The King, as a devout Catholic, visited their shrine, and whilst he was offering up

his prayers he received the news that Queen Claude had given birth to a fine boy. Francis, in presence of his suite, said his son should be called Abednego ; he was, however, afterwards named Charles, Duke of Orleans.

Thanks to the saint, or to his own healthy constitution, the Prince prospered, and grew in stature perhaps more than in wisdom ; though, according to his aunt Marguerite, ‘he knew more than other children of his age, and said quite prophetic things.’ A letter of his, when he was eight or nine years old, addressed to the Constable de Montmorency, whom in childish fashion he styled ‘My wife,’ gives proof of his precocious intelligence. It was written apparently at Amboise, while he was staying there with his aunt :

‘ MY WIFE,

‘ There are more wolves here than I ever saw ; they have devoured a horse to-day at M. de Bourges’ place. Do pray ask the King to allow me to take them if I can, as well as some stags and hinds. If my dogs cannot hunt them, a crossbowman might help. I know an excellent marksman. There is a lady here, who is *enceinte*, who has a craving for venison, and I will keep her company. So, my wife, I commend myself specially to you. I beg of you to write to me often, and tell me how the

King and Madame are, and say I commend myself to their good graces.

‘ My wife, I went out into the fields to-day, and amused myself much. I went as far as a quarry of sandstone, and I send you a specimen. Then I saw two partridges taken by my tiercelet. I saw also the rivulets of the fountains that are the finest in the world. I know something more, but I shall not say what.

‘ Your good husband and friend,
‘ CHARLES.’

The youth who reflected the King’s image was, of course, his favourite. As he grew up, a turbulent, ambitious spirit developed itself in him, and he took advantage of his father’s marked preference to give himself all sorts of airs. At the time when the households of the Princes were formed, the Dauphin had, as a matter of course, the first choice of personages. The Duke of Orleans refused to name anyone, saying, ‘ He would not take his brother’s leavings.’ He chose his staff among the provincial nobility, Tavannes, a great friend of his being among the first. When he was sent to the army in the North, under the guardianship of the old Duke of Guise, the Prince rebelled, and gave himself the airs of a sovereign whenever Guise interposed in military matters.

He was always jealous of his brother, and as soon as he heard that a great battle was imminent in the South, he trembled lest the Dauphin should surpass him by some valorous deed, and insisted on joining him. He took Luxemburg by a happy stroke of fortune. He let it go again as easily as he had taken it, hurrying away to Roussillon, where he arrived on the 16th September. He presented himself before his royal father with the most arrogant boasting air, declaring that the Dauphin was nothing compared to himself. In short, his tone was altogether unbearable.

The Dauphin, being of a reserved and taciturn disposition, remained silent on such occasions, so as to avoid an angry discussion with his brother. He was none the less sensitive to these abusive sallies, and occasionally lost control over himself. The unhappy King knew not how to appease these constant quarrels, which increased in bitterness and frequency as his sons grew older. The Court was divided into two camps, one in favour of the Dauphin, the other of the Duke ; hence there was always an excuse for numberless ambitious plans and intrigues.

The Dauphin, his mistress Diane de Poictiers, and Montmorency, formed a trio of Catholic fanatics, ruled by a despotic, persecuting spirit. They were powerless for the moment, but looked forward to the future. Montmorency, banished from Court, lived

either at Rouen or Chantilly, waiting for the King's death, when he hoped to regain his influence. Diane de Poitiers, sure of her approaching triumph, bore the insolence of her rival, the Duchesse d'Etampes, with angelic patience.

The Duke of Orleans, the Duchesse d'Etampes, and the King represented religious tolerance, and the cultivation of the arts. Madame d'Etampes, in anticipation of the King's demise, became the friend and partizan of the Duke of Orleans, who, on his side, was attached to her, and was an admirer of her personal and intellectual charms, of which she knew how to make good use. As she was childless, she announced her intention of adopting the Duke as her heir. His marriage with a princess of the Emperor's family was her pet project ; it would secure to him a sort of independent sovereignty, which would be a personal guarantee to herself. The Duke laughingly assured her he would appoint her regent of the Netherlands when he recovered them, and this promise gratified her.

Untiring in her efforts to prevail on Francis to conclude this arrangement, the Duchess was utterly oblivious of national interests. She even kept up a secret understanding with Charles V. through the intervention of the Count de Longueval, known to be a traitor, and through the Princess of Aremberg. During the Dauphin's last campaign in the North,

fearing that his successes would increase his credit with the King, and render him indisposed to the Imperial alliance, she was said to have sent secret information to the Emperor as to the state of the French army.

Whether these accusations were true or false, the fact that Charles V., immediately after the peace was concluded, sent for the Duke of Orleans to Soissons, and received him most cordially, gives them a colour of authenticity. Tavannes' brother, who accompanied the Prince, gives the following account of their reception :

'On our arrival at Crespy, the Emperor came to meet M. d'Orléans at the door of his house. He appeared much pleased to see him; took him to his room, where they remained in conference a considerable time. The room next to the Emperor's was allotted to the Duke, and to it the Emperor escorted his guest in order that he might take off his boots, and further, the Duke's table was served from the Emperor's kitchen.'

This good understanding was confirmed, after the signature of the treaty of peace, by a visit paid to the Emperor at Brussels. The Duke and he were alike rejoiced at the treaty being settled.

The King had long suspected these clandestine dealings, and in a letter to his sister seems to have become aware that they existed. But weak, ill, and

ruled by his mistress and his son, he had no strength left to counteract or punish the wrongdoers. His distress found vent in doleful lamentations made in confidence to his sister.

Had Francis wished to ascertain his chances of recovery left, he had but to note day by day the countenances of those who surrounded him. If he seemed better, disquiet was evident ; if there were a threat of prompt dissolution, irrepressible joy illuminated every face. Even the Dauphin, usually so undemonstrative, could not always conceal his impatience to seize the sceptre.

One day, says Vieilleville, the Dauphin, in the midst of his favourites, began saying, ‘When he was King, he should name such and such persons marshals or grandmasters, chamberlains, masters of artillery,’ adding, ‘that he should recall the Constable, who had fallen into disgrace with the King.’

Vieilleville tried in vain to check this dangerous conversation, but the Dauphin continued, and being unwilling to be a party to the Prince’s indiscretion, he left the room. A listener was present, however, to whom no one gave heed—one of the King’s jesters, named Briandas ; he went straight to his master, who was at dinner, and, dropping the title of King, by which he was accustomed to address him, said :

‘God save you ! François de Valois.’

‘Hey, Briandas ! who has taught you that lesson ?’

‘Sblood, thou art King no longer ! I have just been witness to it. And thou, M. de Thaiz, art no longer master of artillery : Brissac is appointed.’ Then, turning to another, ‘Thou art not Grand Chamberlain, Saint André is ;’ and thus he went on, ending by addressing the King :

‘Zounds ! thou wilt soon see Montmorency back again ; he will make thee do his will, and will teach thee to be a fool. Get thee gone ! I adjure God, thou art a dead man !’

The King, struck by this apostrophe, took the jester aside, with the Cardinal de Lorraine, the Count de Saint Pol, and Madame d’Etampes, and commanded him, as he valued his life, to name all who had been present at this scene. Briandas did so. M. de Vieilleville’s name not being mentioned, the King inquired about him.

The jester replied that when the new King began his distributions, Vieilleville, unable to stop him, had left the room, telling him he was selling the skin before the bear was killed.

The King’s anger was deeply roused, and at the head of thirty or forty archers, accompanied by the Captain of his Scotch Guards, he started for the Dauphin’s apartments. The Prince, warned in time, had escaped, and the King could only vent his wrath

on the innocent grooms-in-waiting, pages, lackeys, pursuivants-at-arms, and even on the furniture, striking out recklessly with his halberd, throwing chairs and tables out of windows, sparing neither tapestries, beds, nor anything else.

The Dauphin was obliged to absent himself from Court for three weeks after this scandal, and only obtained leave to return on the solicitations of the ladies and nobles, who did their utmost to effect a reconciliation.

Death suddenly ended the rivalry of the two brothers, for the Duke of Orleans was snatched away in an unexpected manner before his father, who was prostrated by this cruel blow.

Notwithstanding the peace of Crespy, the struggle between France and England for the possession of Boulogne still went on. The King, unable to take the head of his army or to mount his horse, established himself near to the belligerents, and gave his orders from the Abbey of Foremoutiers; his sons followed him, but as the skirmishes were mostly insignificant, they amused themselves in the intervals by tilting and fencing, the Duke of Orleans being always the first in these exercises.

One day, returning from hunting with the Count de Tavannes, the prince descried a comet, and pointed it out to his companion, asking him what it portended.

Tavannes, laughing, replied that perhaps it was his particular star, announcing his death.

The Duke of Orleans, in full health and spirits, was highly amused at the idea.

Some days after, the English, who were blockaded in Calais, sallied forth to make a raid in the environs; the King sent Tavannes with M. d'Orleans' company to meet the foe. The expedition was a brilliant success; and De Tavannes, having dispersed the English, returned delighted to give an account of the fray to the Duke, and, rushing into his room, displayed the flags that had been taken, and gave a list of the prisoners. Suddenly he noticed that the Prince was in bed, suffering great pain, and his joy was changed into sorrow. The Duke of Orleans embraced him, and said :

‘Friend, I am a dead man. All our projects are over; my sole regret is not to be able to reward you for your services.’

At this time the plague was raging throughout the country; the army was decimated by it. The soldiers, exposed to a deluge of rain, were obliged to sleep in holes dug in the ground covered with a handful of straw or thatch; and these improvised dwellings too frequently formed their burying-place, for out of 10,000 men only 800 or 900 survived.

The Duke of Orleans had at first laughed at those who showed alarm, boasting that a French

Prince never yet died of the plague. One day in bravado, with some of his suite, he entered a house where eight persons had recently died of the fearful malady. The revellers took the ticking off the feather-beds, covered themselves with the feathers, and in this guise ran wildly from one end of the camp to the other. The prince got over-excited and warm, drank a glass of water and went to bed. Two hours after he awoke, and cried out :

‘I am ill ! it is the plague. I shall die of it !’

Remedies had no effect ; he became rapidly worse, and Francis was summoned to his son’s bedside.

‘Ah, my lord !’ said the young prince, ‘I am dying ; but since I have seen your Majesty I die content.’

These were his last words. A few minutes after he expired.

Francis, like King David, accepted even this as coming from God. But, overwhelmed by the blow, he quitted the seat of war.

CHAPTER XVI.

QUEEN MARGUERITE AT PAU—DEATH OF FRANCIS I.
AND OF MARGUERITE D'ANGOULÈME.

MARGUERITE also was ageing fast, her life had been a series of anxieties, deceptions, and sorrows ; she was happy neither as a wife nor as a mother.

‘Henry d’Albret ill-used her,’ says Brantôme ; ‘and, but for the King her brother’s threats and reprimands, would have behaved still worse to her.’

Marguerite’s correspondence makes no mention of these trials, which her gentle nature no doubt in some degree enabled her to bear. Whenever she alludes to her husband, she does so with solicitude and affection, entering into his plans, careful of his interests, and sharing his wishes. Of her two children, she lost her son at five months old. Jeanne d’Albret, her daughter, had but little filial tenderness for her mother. Marguerite’s chief sorrows, however, were on her brother’s account ; her deep-rooted affection for him was the dominating sentiment of her heart

and life. She adored Francis, who, accustomed to blind adulation from others and his sister's devotion, thought she should rest satisfied with his glory and success. He had engaged, according to the terms of his sister's contract, to restore Spanish Navarre to Henri d'Albret ; but he never made the slightest effort to keep his word. Henri, irritated, was constantly urging Marguerite to remind Francis of his promise ; but her earnest entreaties produced no result. Henri d'Albret therefore lent an ear to the secret proposals of Charles V. to conclude a marriage between the latter's son Philip and little Jeanne, who was at the time two years and a half old.

In view of this alliance the Emperor promised to re-establish the old kingdom of Navarre in its entirety. The letters treating of this plan were intercepted by the Cardinal de Grammont, Archbishop of Bordeaux, who communicated them to the King, to whom the bare idea of an alliance which would leave France open to Spain was insupportable. Means of putting an end to the affair were not wanting : Francis adopted that most painful to his sister by taking her child from her, and confining it at the Château de Plessis-lez-Tours under his own personal authority. At a subsequent period he chose a husband for her, irrespective of her parents' consent.

Marguerite submitted in silent obedience (as

usual) to her brother's will, but felt none the less the cruelty of this separation from her only child. She was allowed to select a governess for her daughter, and gave her Madame de Silly, a lady to whom she was much attached. From this date Marguerite was constantly on the road to Plessis-lez-Tours, eagerly anxious to learn every detail of little Jeanne's disposition, development, health, and nervously alarmed at the slightest accident.

In the month of December, 1537, while the Court was in Paris, the news arrived that Mademoiselle d'Albret was dangerously ill with fever complicated with dysentery ; it was even said that she was dying. It was dark when the messenger arrived. The retinue of the Queen of Navarre, dispersed in various quarters of Paris, could not easily be found ; but nothing deterred Marguerite from setting out. She took the litter of Madame Margot, her niece, the King's third daughter, and started, staying the night at Bourg-la-Reine. On halting she went immediately to the church, observing to the persons with her, 'My heart forebodes me, I know not why, that my child is dead.' Her faithful lady-of-honour, Brantôme's aunt, accompanied her ; they prayed for some time, the Queen accusing herself before God that her child's illness was a judgment on her for her sins.

As she left the church she said, 'The Holy Ghost

has promised me that my child will recover.' At supper she continued to speak of God's goodness and her child's recovery.

On leaving table she took up a Bible, and opening it at a chapter in Ezekiel, her eye fell on a text of good omen.

Suddenly a postilion's horn was heard—a messenger from Tours! The people crowded round the door eager for tidings. Marguerite rushed to the window and inquired the news. No answer being given her, she fell on her knees in prayer, and the Bishop of Séez entered. On seeing him the Queen continued kneeling on the floor, and exclaimed: 'Now I understand that my daughter is in Heaven!'

Her emotion was so excessive that the Bishop feared the effects of a sudden revulsion, and used great precautions in telling her that her daughter's life was saved.

But her maternal trials were not yet at an end.

In 1540 Francis, to win the German Princes' favour, offered his niece to the Duke of Cleves, Henry VIII.'s brother-in-law. Jeanne's parents were in despair at the idea of this separation: the distance and the rough manners in Germany appalled them; they entreated the King to leave their daughter with them. Francis, however, would brook no opposition; and Marguerite, in mute resignation, bowed to her brother's will, even upbraiding her

daughter for wishing to oppose the King in contracting a marriage so hateful to her. The following letter written on the occasion shows Marguerite's attitude towards her brother :

'Having heard that my daughter was unmindful of the great honour you conferred on her by your visit, and seeing that she has no right to a will of her own, forgetting herself so far as to entreat you not to marry her to M. de Cleves, I know not what to say, my lord, nor what to think, I am so shocked and so pained. If I only knew what creature has put such an idea in her head, I would make such a demonstration as should convince you, my lord, that this act of folly is made contrary to the wishes of her father and mother, who conform themselves entirely to yours.'

Jeanne was reduced to submission, but not before she had drawn the following striking protestation, signed before the notaries, Legier and Terrault, and witnessed by the Cardinal de Tournon, the Bishops of Angoulême and Mâcon, and other personages :

'I, Jeanne de Navarre, declare and protest that the marriage forced on me with the Duke of Cleves is so against my will that I have not, and never will, give my consent to it, save by compulsion and out of fear of the King. The King and Queen, my

father and my mother, threaten to have me whipped by Madame de Silly, if I refuse to obey the King's pleasure with regard to this marriage. They even say I should be whipped to death if I continue to resist, that thus I shall entail ruin and destruction on my father and mother, and their royal house. The menace of ruining my aforesaid parents has filled me with such awe that I flee to God for protection, since my father and mother have abandoned me. I have told them that I can never love the Duke of Cleves, and that I will have none of him.

'I appeal to God, and to you my witnesses, to sign this my protest.'

This was certainly a bold step for a young lady of twelve, brought up with due discipline by the poet, Nicolas Bourbon.

The King, however, was not to be moved from his purpose, and the marriage was celebrated with great pomp at Chatellerault on the 15th July. The child, weighed down by her heavy bridal attire, or giving way to her temper, could scarcely walk; and the King, remarking the child's inability or unwillingness to move, ordered Montmorency to take her in his arms and carry her. Further, to make this ill-assorted union indissoluble, the bride and bridegroom entered the nuptial couch together in presence of the assembled Court. The mother's heart, however, prevailed; the ceremony was a

simple formality ; and the Duke of Cleves left the same evening, after signing a treaty of alliance with the King, and obtaining the promise that his wife should shortly be sent him.

Three years passed, and the young Duchess was still in France. The Duke, irritated, threatened to break off his alliance. At last the King obliged her to join her husband. At every stage of her journey, Jeanne entered fresh protests against the violence done to her feelings, and begged to return. Happily for her, the Duke in the interval had deserted Francis, and allied himself with Charles V. Francis washed his hands of the affair, and sent back the Princess to her parents ; and finally, the marriage was declared null and void.

The King, however, did not restore the child to her father and mother, but established her in a house of the Court with her governess. The King and Queen of Navarre were to defray their daughter's expenses. Marguerite shows how heavily this charge weighed on their finances in a letter to the comptroller of her daughter's household—M. d'Izernay—recommending him to be economical. Marguerite had no private fortune ; the King, lavish to his mistresses and favourites, forgot his sister, who never asked for anything, save for other people.

Time was telling its sad tale on Marguerite too ; the evening of her days was darkened by accumu-

lated sorrows. Her credit at Court was on the wane ; her friends deserted her. Even Montmorency, whom she had known from his youth—whom she was pleased to call her nephew, though they were contemporaries ; in whom she placed perfect confidence—sought how to discredit her. He had never loved anyone ; although he had shown a self-interested regard for the cherished sister of his Sovereign. In a way, too, he was jealous of her, and watched her suspiciously ; but at all times her religious tolerance displeased him.

Brantôme relates as having heard from an authentic source that ‘Montmorency, one day discoursing on religious matters with the King, did not scruple to tell him if he wished to exterminate heretics from his kingdom, he must begin by his sister, the Queen. To which observation the King replied, “ That is out of the question ; she loves me too dearly to differ from me. What *I* believe, *she* will believe ; and she will never embrace a religion prejudicial to my estates.” This being repeated to Marguerite, she ceased to care for Montmorency.’

Marguerite by degrees withdrew to her little Béarn, where she was active in good works and in rendering her reign beneficial. She built the Château of Pau, created the gardens which surround it, and did all in her power to contribute to the prosperity and welfare of the country. Agriculture was improved ;

charitable foundations, such as hospitals at Alençon and Mortagne, established, together with orphanages at Pau and in Paris. She visited the poor in their troubles, and in illness often sent her own doctor to attend them—in short, she was the counsel and consolation of all who needed either. She read through all petitions. Her maxim was that no one ought to go away vexed or saddened by a prince's words ; that kings and princes were not lords and masters, but only the ministers of the poor. Even her friends were associated in her good works.

'Georges d'Armagnac,' she wrote to her brother, 'has fed eight thousand poor, and done so much good, that if God should take him from me, I shall miss him greatly ; for I rely more on his good offices in my old age than upon those of any child I might have had.'

Though the revenues of her estates were small, she never consented to sell any judicial charge, saying, 'This sordid commerce of magistracy is the cause of corruption, dishonesty, and all the vices which undermine and destroy commonwealths.' She named to the offices of judge and magistrate men of capacity and integrity. Her own household was governed with remarkable order and sagacity. Not given to reprimand her servants, she appointed rules of conduct and of life ; and, if infringed after a second warning, the delinquents were dismissed, as

she would not tolerate idleness, slander, drunkenness, gambling, immorality, blasphemy, or sedition among her retainers. Marguerite's influence had, however, decreased greatly; and so far from being able to stop persecution, she had now to defend herself from the violence of fanatic zeal. An inquiry seems even to have been set on foot in her immediate neighbourhood; for she wrote to the King, 'Sire, none of us have been found to be Sacramentarians.' The rage with which she inspired the bigots reached such a pitch, that they tried to poison her. 'This prisoner,' she wrote again, 'has freely confessed that he had resolved to poison us.' A little further on she says: 'I regret very much that Lescure, who has plotted my death and that of the Count Palatine, has not been taken, as the King of Navarre hoped.'

The Bishop of Tarbes, afterwards Cardinal de Grammont, and the Cardinal de Tournon, called the most virtuous of intolerants, besought her to silence her enemies by making a public profession of her orthodoxy. She refused so humiliating a step from pride and for love of her suspected friends, to whom, if she could not shield them from the King's anger, she would at least offer an asylum. She was the guardian angel of a group of interesting persons, such as Gérard Roussel, whom she made Bishop of Oléron; Nicholas Bourbon, her daughter's

tutor, an ardent lover of Latin classics ; Montluc, Bishop of Valence ; Lefebvre d'Étaple, librarian of Blois ; René de Silly, bailiff and Governor of the province ; Mademoiselle de Saint Pather, her almoner ; Mademoiselle de Beneston, and Madame de Bourdeilles, Brantôme's aunt ; Amyot, Professor of the University of Bourges ; and Marot, her poet. Sainte-Marthe tells us, ‘The good Queen was not satisfied in having so many notable personages in her house ; she always paid them as great honour as possible ; never said a word against them behind their backs, and never addressed them by word of mouth or in writing without giving them their title of honour.’

She took the head of her hospitable table, always dressed in the simple, sober, dark costume she adopted in her youth, ‘a mantle of black velvet slashed under the arms, a black skirt, a high collar trimmed with sable and fastened with pins in front, a habit-shirt frilled at the neck, the peak of her bonnet low over her forehead.’

Sobriety reigned at her table ; the conversation turned on medicine, history, natural history, but above all, on religion. A text was chosen, everyone expressed his opinion, citing that of the fathers. Religious maxims were compared with philosophical principles. Marguerite discussed these matters with considerable skill, though in presence of her

husband she was silent out of respect to him, says her biographer. One day a Spanish gentleman found himself in this circle : he was amazed at the learned current of conversation, and above all, at the absence of the nobility from the Queen's circle.

Often while she was occupied with her needle her attendants read aloud to her; occasionally a diversion from graver subjects was made by semi-religious, semi-profane theatricals. The Queen composed a tragi-comical piece, taking the subject from the New Testament. It was played (by some of the first Italian actors) in the King's presence ; a monk was generally the clown of the piece, the Queen now and again taking a part also. 'We amuse ourselves,' she wrote to M. d'Izernay, 'by acting mummeries and farces.'

If Marguerite remained faithful to theology, she did not disdain the tender theme of love. Her last poem, '*La Coche*', is a discussion on the blind perfidious god between three ladies, who appeal to the Queen as umpire. She replies :

'Mes cinquante ans, ma vertu affaiblie
Le temps passé, commandent que j'oublie
Pour mieux penser à la prochaine mort
Sans plus avoir mémoire ni remords,
Si en amour a douleur ou plaisir.'

In spite of this disclaimer, up to the end of her life Marguerite continued to discourse on the tender

passion, mingling the sacred with the profane in her conversation as in her comedies.

Captain de Bourdeilles, Brantôme's brother, went one day, while on a visit to his mother at Pau, to pay homage to the Queen. He had been deeply enamoured of a Mademoiselle de la Roche, whom he met at Ferrara as maid-of-honour to Madame Renée. This young lady, suspected of heresy, returned to France, and sought refuge with the Queen of Navarre; Bourdeilles remained with the army. A few weeks before his visit, Mademoiselle de la Roche had been taken ill and had suddenly died. Marguerite said nothing, but led the captain to the church. Halting on a tombstone:

‘Cousin!’ (a marriage alliance entitled him to this epithet), ‘do you feel nothing under your feet?’

‘No, Madame,’ he replied.

‘Think again, cousin.’

‘I have thought, but can feel nothing but the stone.’

‘Heaven help you!’ said the Queen; ‘you are on the tomb and the ashes of poor Mademoiselle de la Roche, your lost love; and since souls preserve the faculty of consciousness after death, no doubt she has felt a thrill at your approach. If you have not perceived it, it is on account of the thickness of the stone. Say a Pater, an Ave, and a De Profundis for her, like a faithful lover and good Christian. I will leave you to accomplish this pious act.’

Marguerite, in addition to her mysticism, was possessed with an insatiable spirit of curiosity. She had certainly much faith, but she was troubled with doubts and incredulity ; her thoughts oscillated between the invisible and the visible world, asking each to reveal to her the secret of life and death.

Brantôme relates that a favourite attendant of the Queen's being in the last agony, her Majesty wished to see her, and she remained by her bedside, contemplating the sad spectacle. One of her ladies asked her what pleasure it could give her to watch a human being die ? She answered that, having heard learned doctors say that the swan sang before its death, because the spirit within was working its way out of its long neck, she wished to note if there were any breath, sound, or sign of the passage as it took flight ; but she perceived none, and added, if her faith were less firm, she should be puzzled what to think or believe touching the separation of the soul from the body. Speaking one day of the joys of heaven, 'All that is true,' she said, 'but we remain so long dead underground before we get there.'

In the midst of life's cruel experiences Marguerite had created a sanctuary within herself. In her faith, in goodness and justice, in her constant attachment to her friends, her charities, her unselfishness, her exemption from the scathing passions of ambition

and pride, she found a refuge from the selfish craving for absolute power. Her spirit of resignation preserved in her the *naïveté* of her early sentiments; her tenderness and her romantic impulses were unimpaired by time. What can be more touching than her unvarying love for Francis I.! She abstained from appearing at Court so soon as she became aware that her presence was less desired ; Montmorency reigned there, and kept her aloof. She would never admit that her brother authorized political or religious persecution, declaring that he was deceived and led away by others. To her he was ever a hero above the comprehension and judgment of other men ; her enthusiastic love for him remained unshaken to the last.

During his journeys and campaigns she delighted to be with him : at Valence in 1538 ; at the camp of Avignon, which she inspected with Montmorency ; in Picardy at the time of the Imperial invasion, she was ever at his side. When they were apart, she wrote to him frequently, and the King's sad and confidential account of the treachery of Madame d'Etampes filled her with emotion, and enlisted her sympathy. The last interview between Francis and Marguerite took place in the beginning of 1546. Francis, ill, irritable, aged prematurely, begged his sister to join him. She went to him at once.

The Queen of Navarre arrived on the 15th

January, 1546. As the Cardinal d'Armagnac writes to the Duchess of Ferrara : ‘The Queen sends me word that she finds his Majesty well, without pain, suffering only from the suppuration of an abscess, which continues to discharge.’ Her presence acted momentarily as a charm on the royal invalid—it was a return to the good old times. She was ever the same, his darling, his Marguerite of Marguerites. Her gentle gaiety cheered him ; in spite of the lines on her sweet face, the silver threads in her hair, and the once upright figure, now bent by years and rheumatism, the smile on her lips, the light in her eyes were unchanged. They recalled together the events of the past. They visited together libraries, collections, studios of painting and typography, talking familiarly with artists and workmen, whom they encouraged and recompensed. They inspected the châteaux built and ornamented by the King ; lively repartees enlivened their dialogues on art, literature, psychology ; love, the untiring theme, was not forgotten, fanning the spent flame of bygone years. One day at Chambord, as Marguerite was defending the fair sex, Francis wrote on one of the window panes, *Toute femme varie*.

Marguerite took leave of her brother in the course of the summer, promising to return soon. Alas ! this was the last ray of sunshine in her life. Francis's health declined rapidly at the beginning of

the winter ; his weakness and his feverish restlessness increased daily. By constant change he hoped to alleviate his sufferings. He would spend one night at Villepreux, the next at Dampierre, Chevreuse, Limours, Rochefort ; finally, one night at Rambouillet. At the end of March the pains and fever had augmented to such a degree that to move elsewhere was impossible. Paradin says he died of an abscess, which caused him extreme anguish. Persuaded that his end was approaching, he sent for the Dauphin, to whom he gave final recommendations, urging upon him the necessity of excluding Montmorency from power, and admonishing him to beware of the Guise, whose ambition was already manifest. We know what came of it.

The Secretary of State, Bochetel, writing to his son-in-law, M. de l'Aubespine, a report of the King's desperate state, says : 'I sent you word that there was no longer any hope, and on the last day of March, between two and three in the afternoon, the King commended his soul to God ; and I assure you that for a century past no prince has ever died with feelings of such contrition and repentance.' Ferriani also bears witness to his pious death, and tells us how he repeated several times the name of God so long as he could speak, and when speech failed him, he still made the sign of the cross on the bed.

While Francis was dying at Rambouillet, Mar-

guerite was in retreat at the Abbey of Tusson, Angoumois—a favourite resort of hers, to which she had added a commodious wing for herself. During her sojourn she took the part of the abbess, and was assiduous at matins, vespers, and the other services, chanting the Psalms and responses with the nuns. One night her brother appeared to her looking pale and wan, and she heard him calling plaintively, ‘Sister, sister!’ She started up and despatched a courier to Paris. ‘Whoever,’ she cried, ‘brings me the news of the King’s recovery, even if he be tired and bespattered, or dirty, I will rush to embrace him as I would the first gentleman of France. If he requires a bed, and can find none whereon to rest, I will give him mine, and will gladly lie on the floor for the good tidings he may bring.’

The courier arrived, but brought the fatal news that the King was no more. No one ventured to apprise Marguerite; her inquiries were unanswered. In her anxiety she was about to despatch a second messenger, when her attention was arrested by groans and sighs in the cloisters. She approached a poor nun whose mind was deranged, but who, being harmless, was left in liberty.

‘Why are you weeping?’ asked the Queen.

‘Alas, Madam, I am crying for you!’

At these words Marguerite exclaimed :

‘You were concealing the King’s death from me,

but the Spirit of God through this poor madwoman has revealed it to me.'

Turning away, she sought the solitude of her apartment, threw herself on her knees, and committed herself to God's care, still sighing out her sorrow in verses :

' Las ! tant malheureuse je suis
Que mon malheur dire ne puis,
Sinon qu'il est sans esperance.

* * * * *

Mort qui m'a faict ce mauvais tour
D'abattre ma force et ma tour
Tout mon refuge et ma défense
N'a sceu ruyner mon amour
Que je vois croistre nuit et jour
Que ma douleur croist et avance.

* * * * *

Je t'envoie ma deffiance
Puisque mon frère est en tes lacs
Prends moi afin qu'un seul soulas
Donne à tous deux rejouissance.'

Marguerite never recovered the shock of her brother's death. She left the administration of her estates to her husband, and abandoned those intellectual pastimes that had once been her delight. Her daughter, married against her consent to Antoine de Bourbon, lived far away. She was still, however, mindful of the welfare of the persons dependent on her. Francis had omitted to secure her the pension he allowed her during his life. She wrote to her

nephew, Henry II., begging him to continue it. Montmorency having sent her a conciliatory message, she replied :

‘ I see that time has not triumphed over your memory. You still recollect the affection I have always had for you from your childhood upwards.’

Marguerite died soon after. The apparition of a lady in white in one of the Queen’s dreams was the prognostic of her death, which took place on 21st December, 1549, at the Château d’Odos, in Bigorre. She expired, after twenty days’ illness, in the fifty-eighth year of her age.

The Court, where she was almost forgotten, attended her funeral, and all the poets and scholars of the time were profuse in writing epitaphs to her memory, in Greek, Latin, French, and Italian. There were so many that they formed a complete volume.

CONCLUSION.

FRANCIS I. exercised a twofold and powerful influence over the future of France, on the one hand by developing all the elements of civilization, on the other by propelling the monarchical tendency towards centralization and absolute power. His instincts were elevated and strong, his judgment weak and wavering ; his natural tastes were refined and intellectual, his temper hasty and violent ; he was as incapable of a broad comprehensive view of facts or ideas as of forming an opinion of men apart from his own individuality. His reign presents the strange anomaly of a prince anxious to emancipate intellect, and to enlarge the sphere of thought and practical activity, whilst destroying all social guarantees which ensure the possession of those benefits.

Wherever established institutions and independence thwarted his will, he diminished their power, and never allowed the States-General to assemble, even when it was to his interest to invoke their

share of responsibility, as in his breach of faith towards Charles V. He took no account of the rights of the communes and provinces when increased taxation was needed. With a stroke of his pen he did away with the time-honoured liberties of the Gallican Church, and crushed the protestations this act called forth with despotic violence.

He debased the magistracy by making all offices venial by his personal intervention in trials, and by passing sentences agreeable to himself. He multiplied the offices of finance and justice in order to profit by their sale, exempting the holders from taxation, and thereby increasing the burdens of the people. This line of conduct was inspired by a puerile despotism which resented an obstacle, not by a cool calculating tyranny that concentrated its modes of action. He destroyed the elements of ancient France without even perceiving that they supported the monarchy by limiting its power, and that by substituting for them an arbitrary sovereign will he was setting up an idol with a cloven foot.

Thus he was unconsciously paving the way for the forty years of civil war which followed his reign, and for that more terrible revolution in which, two centuries later, his dynasty was lost.

He was not better inspired in his struggle for supremacy in foreign affairs. His rival, Charles V., represented an idea—theocracy. In this great con-

ception lay the grandeur of his reign ; but Francis was unequal either to adopt or to combat this cause. To adopt it would have made him a simple lieutenant of the Emperor ; to combat it would have been to his interest, strength, honour, and in accordance with the past history of France. Protestant Europe clamoured for him to be its champion, and had he accepted the *rôle* he would have aggrandized national territory by annexing Flanders, those old French provinces groaning under the Spanish yoke.

Strengthened by the acquisition of this rich industrial territory, and by the moral approbation of England and the German Protestant Princes, Francis would have been invincible. Against such a coalition Charles V. would have been powerless, and easily thrown back to Spain and South Germany. Italy could have been declared independent under the Pope's protection. Soliman could have remained in the East, a permanent threat to Austria, without the presence of his fleet in the Mediterranean ; and an *entente cordiale* with this great prince would have opened the commerce of the East to Europe.

Such a policy would have made of France the greatest country in the world. But her King understood nothing of the part he should have played. The great religious and political problem then pending passed unheeded over his head. He was incapable of appreciating the situation, or of measuring himself

with his rival the Emperor, which would have been the struggle of a dwarf with a giant.

Francis I.'s passion for Italy was the scourge of his reign: it was the passion of a lover for his mistress. His whole soul was absorbed by it, to his own misfortune and to that of France, and because of this blind ardour France forgave him. Despite his faults, his errors, the disasters he caused to his country, and the tears he made to flow, he was forgiven. Francis has never forfeited his popularity. In the days of king-worship the people asked for so little. It was enough to contemplate a handsome face, to believe in a human heart upon the throne. Francis was handsome, gay, sympathetic and sympathizing. 'If my subjects suffer,' he once said, 'I suffer with them.' He led his armies, exposed his person, shared the dangers of his soldiers. Marino Cavali tells us: 'The French have such profound love for their King, that they would willingly sacrifice not only their lives and their fortunes, but even their souls and their honour for his sake.'

He was chivalrous, and imbued with a spirit of civilization; he created the French infantry, founded the army, the royal navy, and began great colonial enterprises.

About this time Christopher Columbus and Americo Vespucio had revealed the existence of the New World, Alvarez Cabral discovered the Brazils,

Fernando Cortes conquered Mexico, Almagro and Pizarro Peru, Vasco de Gama opened the route to the East Indies by doubling the Cape of Good Hope, and Magellan found the straits leading to the Southern Ocean. Francis was unwilling that France should remain a passive spectator. He encouraged a Florentine named Verazini to explore North America, and soon after Jacques Cartier penetrated as far as the Gulf of St. Lawrence, so called because it was discovered on the 10th August, the Feast of St. Lawrence. On the 15th August he saw for the first time Assumption Island, and went up the St. Lawrence as far as Montreal. In 1541 M. de Roberval, his companion, sent a pilot to reconnoitre the north of Canada. Francis enlisted the services of the celebrated sea-captain, Jean Ango, a sort of Medici of Dieppe, who, after realizing an immense fortune in trade, equipped at his sole expense a fleet of twelve or thirteen ships, with which he won great victories over the English, Flemings, Spaniards, and Portuguese, and even captured an island from the English, so says the chronicler. A plebeian by birth, he was raised to the peerage with the title of Vicomte de Dieppe, in honour of his courage and valiant deeds.

The first treaty of commerce in French history was signed between Francis and Gustavus Vasa. To Francis also France owes the development of

the art of printing and silk manufactures; two Genoese, Turquet and Norris, being the first who established silk factories at Lyons.

Financial administration was placed on a better footing during this reign by the intelligent reforms of Montmorency. Debts were liquidated, taxes abated, and mortgages paid off. The King ordered a restriction of expenditure in his children's households, though he himself built magnificent châteaux and monuments, and encouraged art, and in spite of great works and many wars, the State coffers were full when he died.

The celebrated ordinance of Villers-Cotterets (August, 1539) put a limit to lawsuits, and defined the specific powers of civil and ecclesiastical courts. In the Sens circuit, which formerly counted thirty-five attorneys, the number was reduced to five. The immunities of the clergy were reduced at the same time, and by the same decree the use of Latin was prohibited, and French was ordered to be used for all public acts.

Francis emancipated the French language altogether from barbaric Latin, and made it a national tongue, by ordering its use in all political and other administrations.

His zeal for the establishment of the Royal College created a centre of knowledge and art—an asylum for all great intelligences, which he summoned from

every quarter of Europe, whose condition he improved, whose courage he stimulated, whose genius he quickened, not only by his sovereign power, but by his manly spirit. Francis, though proud of his descent, ever believed in nature's aristocracy, and found nothing derogatory to his dignity in treating others on a footing of equality in matters of learning and education.

By promoting the Renaissance movement, Francis created a new society. Women took part in politics, literature, and art, whilst in the rest of Europe they were still in a dependent and inferior position. Francis was one of the first to understand that no great scheme of civilization could exist from which women were excluded, and he appealed to them in this renewal of intellectual life, to which his sister Marguerite so largely contributed. It was found that high and refining intercourse could be held with women, and could be made the source of pure and elevated enjoyment for mutual instruction and advantage. The art of conversation, serious or gay, a spontaneous exchange of wit and ideas, was cultivated—an art that develops the mind, enlarges the circle of knowledge, encourages courtesy, and forms a social link and a moral stimulus, replacing material interests and vulgar passions by disinterested pleasures.

Whatever splendour or renown may be acquired by a more mature civilization, society in the days of

Francis I. will still hold a prominent place in history ; it bears the stamp of genuine spontaneity, generous enthusiasm, and an exuberance of life and joy such as no other century can display.

THE END.







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